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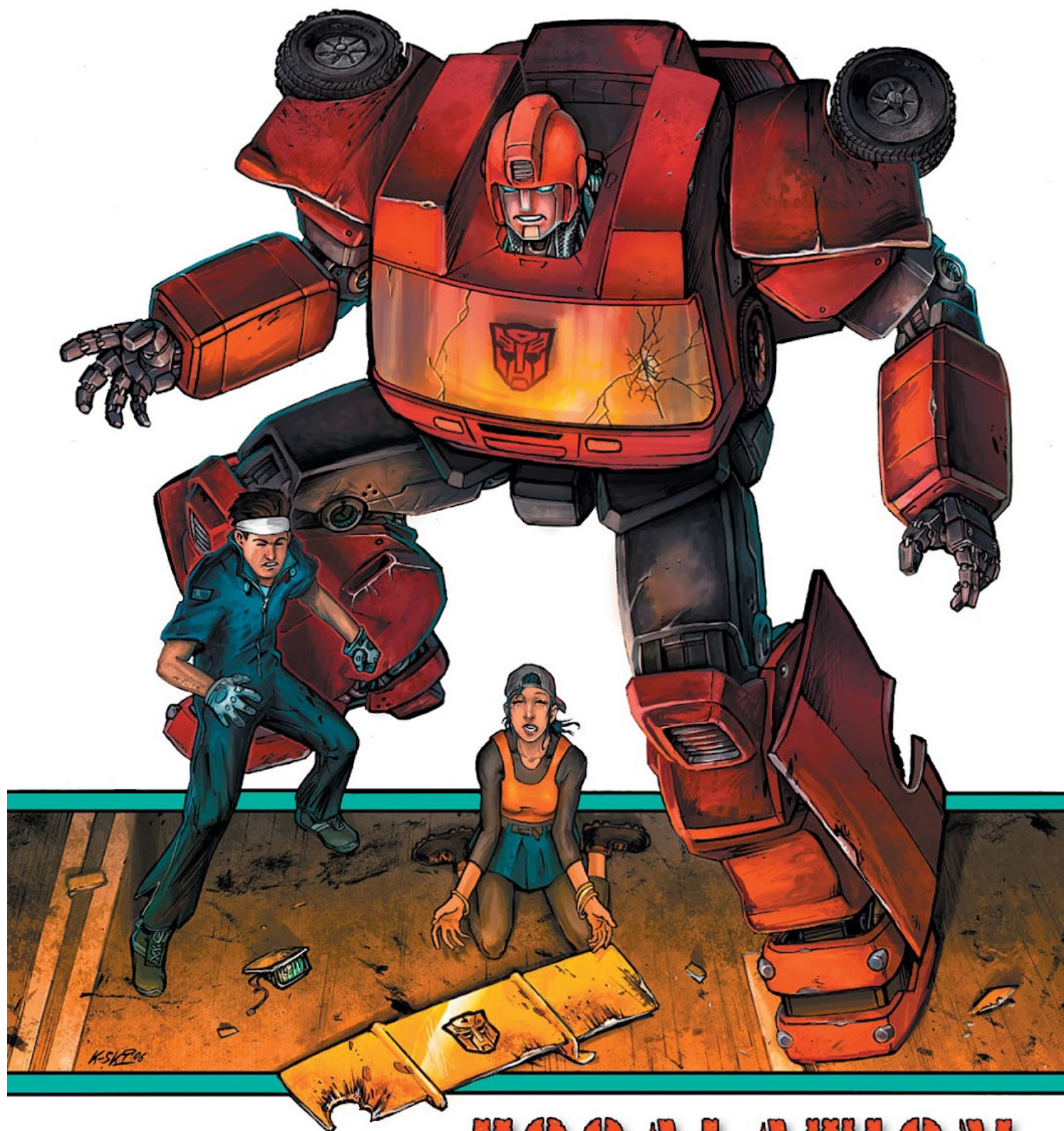
FORMERS™

ESCALATION





THE TRANSFORMERS™

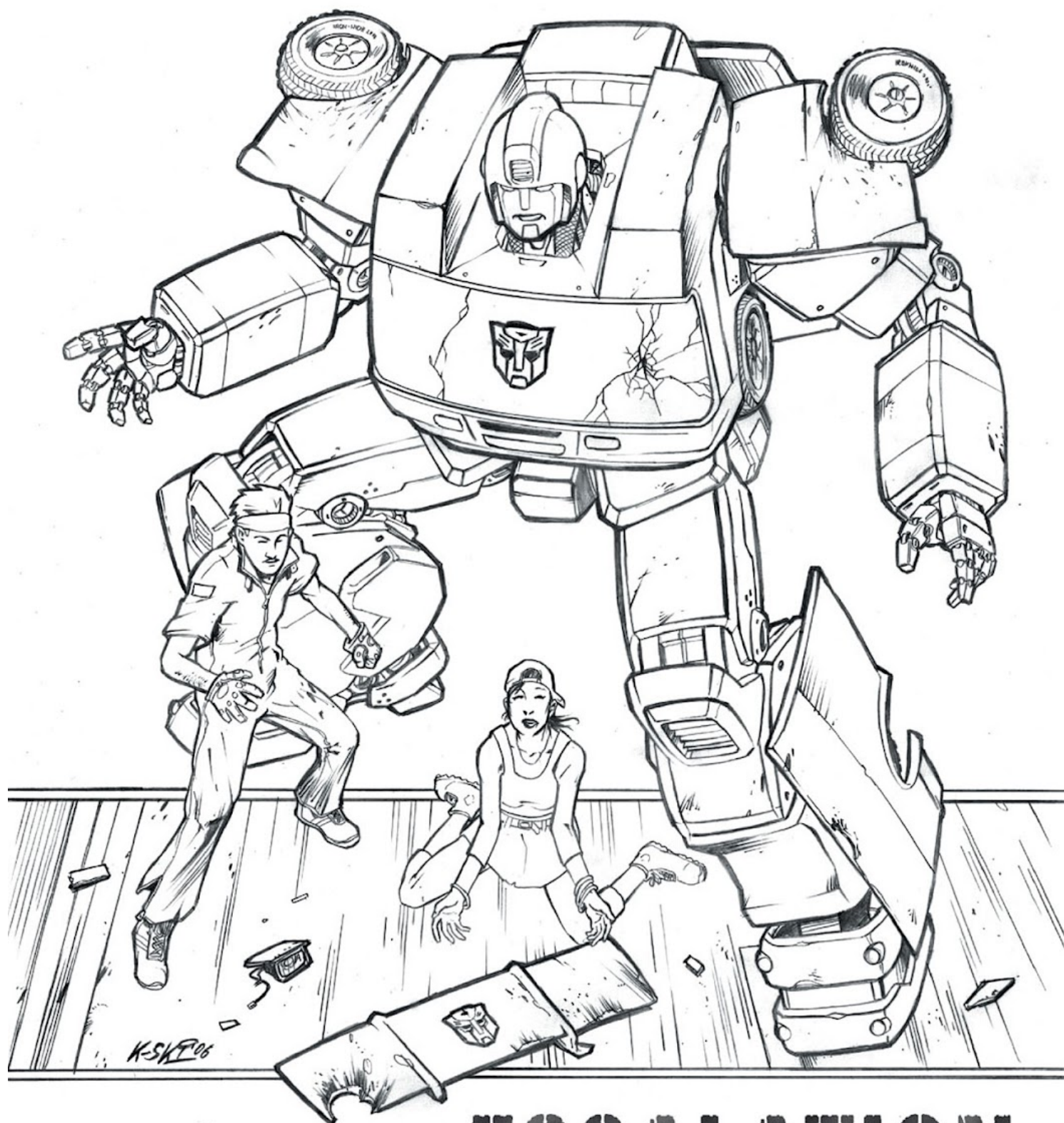


ESCALATION



ISSUE #1
RI • B

THE TRANSFORMERS™



ESCALATION

THE TRANSFORMERS ESCALATION

WRITTEN BY : **SIMON FURMAN**

ART BY : **E.J. SU**

COLORS BY : **JOHN RAUCH**

COLOR ASSIST BY : **ZAC ATKINSON AND AARON MYERS**

LETTERS BY : **CHRIS MOWRY**

EDITS BY : **CHRIS RYALL & DAN TAYLOR**

COVER BY : **E.J. SU**

VARIANT COVER BY : **KLAUS SCHERWINSKI**



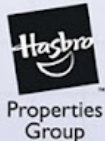
ISSUE NUMBER ONE

Present day Earth: the DECEPTICON infiltration gambit has begun, the opening moves made in a multi-layered strategy that may well spell the total and utter destruction of the planet. Having dispatched his traitorous unit commander, STARScream, MEGATRON has taken control of affairs on Earth, the discovery of Ore-13 (a potent variant on the long-exhausted CYBERTRONIAN power source known as ENERGON) meriting his personal attention. Now, the local AUTOBOT tactical response unit (from their hidden base beneath the surface of Lake Michigan) and their newly arrived commander-in-chief, OPTIMUS PRIME, prepare for the worst.

PHASE TWO BEGINS...



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Special thanks to Hasbro's Aaron Archer, Elizabeth Griffin, Amie Lozanski and Richard Zambarano for their invaluable assistance.

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"THIS IS HOW IT
GOES DOWN..."

"ON THE OPEN ROAD,
MAYBE JUST WITHIN SOME
CITY LIMITS SOMEWHERE,
THE TARGET IS *ISOLATED*..."

"...IMMOBILIZED."

"THEN..."

WHOOOOOM!

"ONE *LESS*
ALIEN MECH."



"OF COURSE..."



...OUT THERE,
IN THE FIELD,
IT MIGHT ALL
BE *VERY*
DIFFERENT.



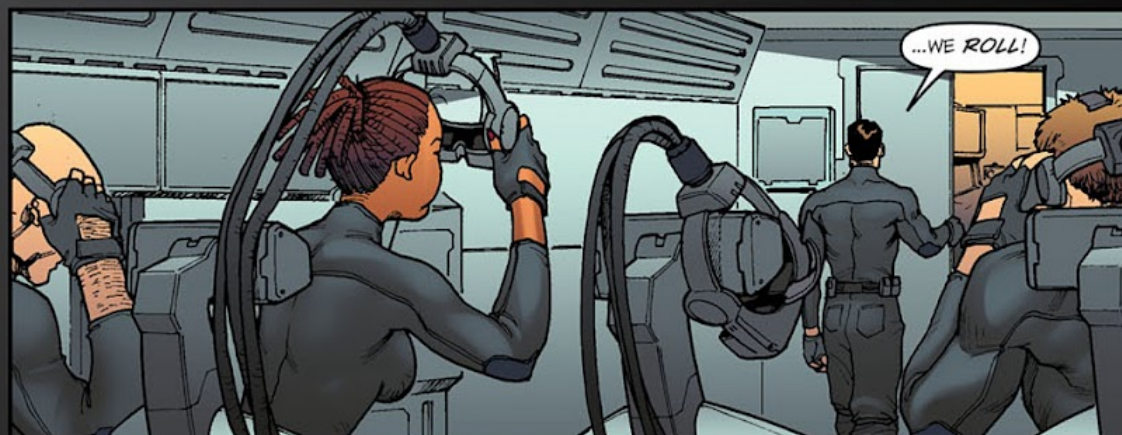
WHICH IS WHY
WE HAVE TO BE
PREPARED FOR *ANY*
EVENTUALITY, *ANY*
GIVEN SET OF
CIRCUMSTANCES.



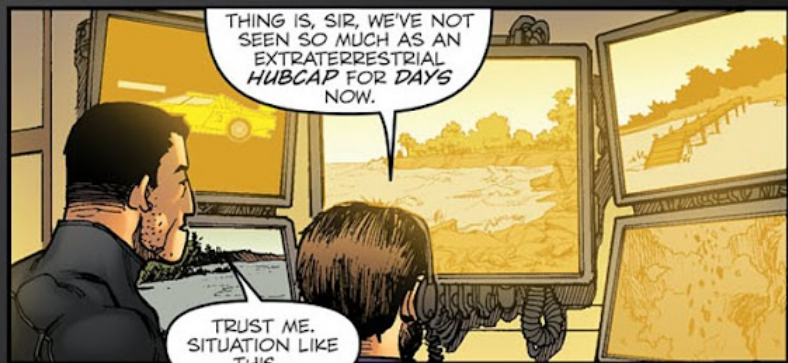
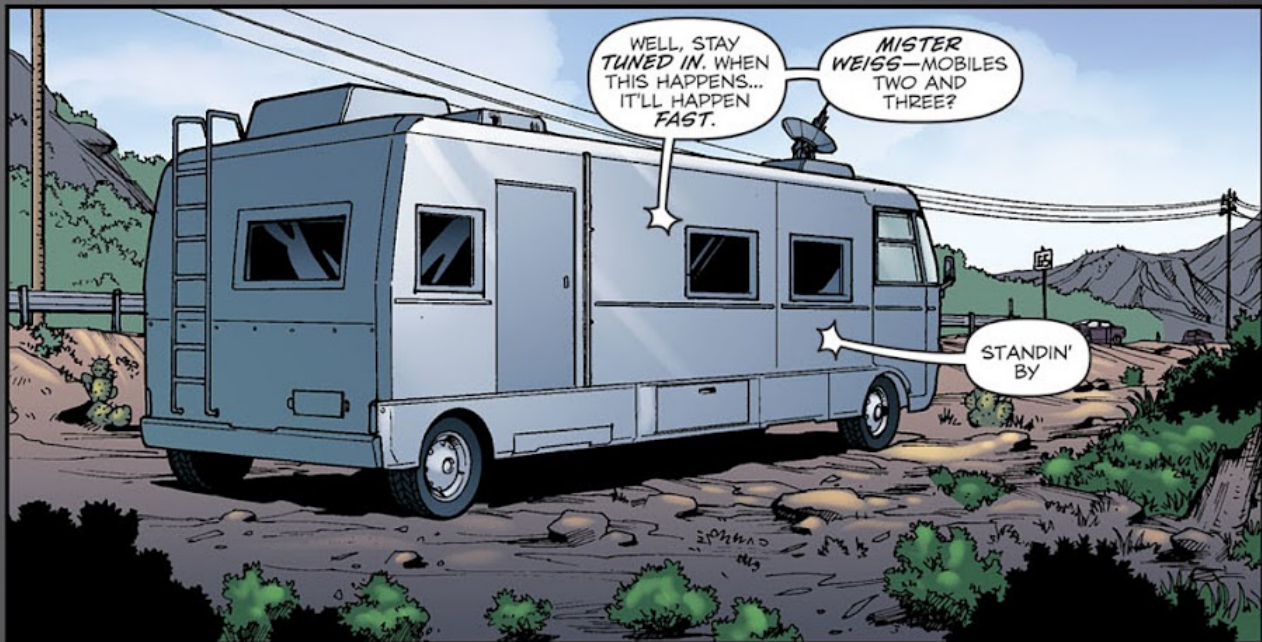
MACHINATION FIELD UNIT:
SOUTHWEST MICHIGAN.

THAT'S IT FOR
NOW. ORDINANCE
CHECK IS AT 0900,
NEXT *SIMULATION*
AT 0945.

AND REMEMBER,
FROM THIS POINT
ON, SOON AS WE
GET AN ACTIONABLE
PROFILE...



...WE ROLL!



ARK-19:

YOU'RE GOING
BACK. TO
YOUR HOMES,
YOUR LIVES.

BUT...

WE'RE WHAT?

...I THOUGHT WE
WERE A PART OF
THIS NOW, KIND OF, I
DUNNO, HONORARY
AUTOBOTS.

I—WE—DON'T
WANT TO GO BACK.
RATCHET, AFTER
ALL WE'VE SEEN...
AND DONE... HOW
CAN WE?

HECK,
SOME OF US
DON'T HAVE
ANYTHING TO
GO BACK TO.
MY GARAGE,
WELL...

...I DON'T THINK
THE INSURANCE
WILL COVER IT.

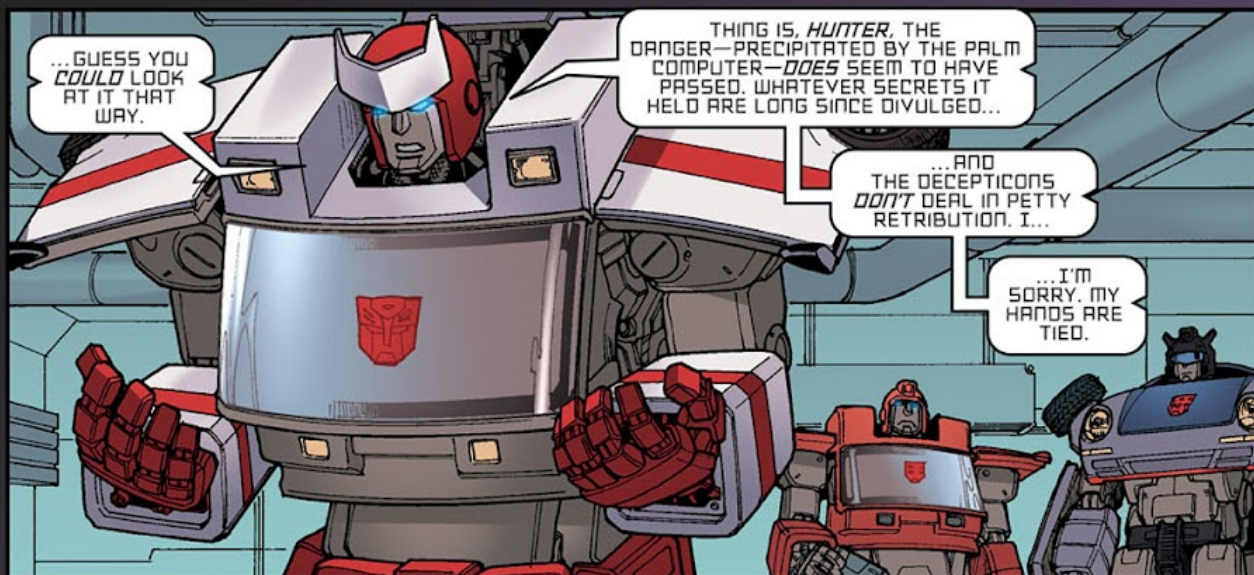
IF IT WAS
UP TO ME...

OH, I GET IT.
THIS IS PROWL'S
DOING, ISN'T IT?
HE'S THE ONE
SHOWING US THE
DOOR.

FIGURES.

DOESN'T MATTER
WE CAME THROUGH FOR
YOU GUYS, ALMOST GOT
OURSELVES KILLED IN THE
PROCESS... WE'RE NOW
JUST SURPLUS TO
REQUIREMENTS.
RIGHT?

I...



...GUESS YOU *COULD* LOOK AT IT THAT WAY.

THING IS, *HUNTER*, THE DANGER—PRECIPITATED BY THE PALM COMPUTER—*DOES* SEEM TO HAVE PASSED. WHATEVER SECRETS IT HELD ARE LONG SINCE DIVULGED...

...AND THE DECEPTICONS *DON'T* DEAL IN PETTY RETRIBUTION. I...

...I'M SORRY. MY HANDS ARE TIED.



RIGHT. WHATEVER.

VERITY? YOU OKAY? IT'S UNLIKE YOU TO *NOT* HAVE AN OPINION.



FH. I'VE NOT BEEN WANTED ANYWHERE, BY ANYONE, SINCE I STARTED CRAWLING.



WHY SHOULD IT BE ANY *DIFFERENT* THIS TIME AROUND?



OREGON (DECEPTICON
COMMAND BUNKER):

SO, ORE-13...

...TELL
ME MORE.

IT'S SOME KIND OF
CLOSE RELATIVE TO
ENERGON, ONLY FIVE OR
SIX TIMES AS POTENT.

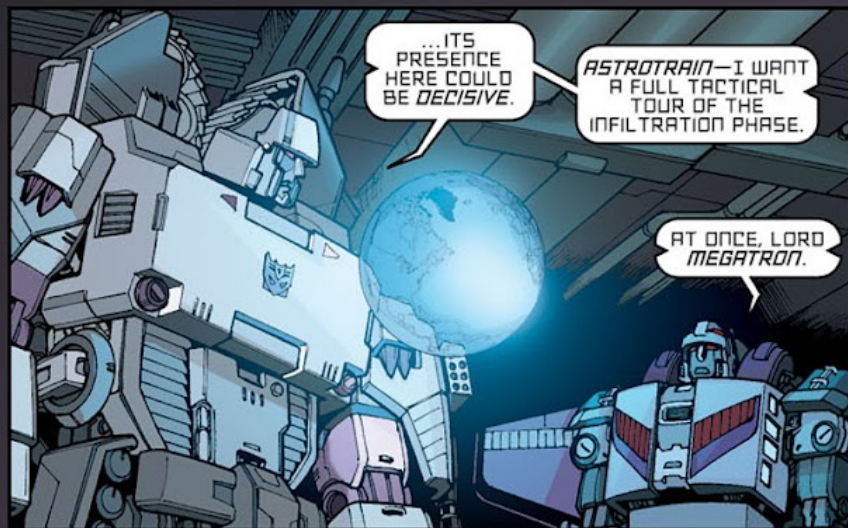
THUS FAR, WE'VE
LOCATED *ELEVEN*
DISTINCT
SEAMS, BUT THERE
COULD BE MORE.

LITTLE WONDER
STARSCREAM SAW
FIT TO ADVANCE
HIS OWN CAUSE.

NATURALLY OCCURRING
ENERGON WAS ASSUMED TO BE
UNIQUE TO *CYBERTRON*. WE'VE
BEEN LIVING OFF ARTIFICIAL
SUBSTITUTES FOR LONGER THAN
I CARE TO REMEMBER.

STILL, ONE CAN'T HELP
BUT WONDER IF—AT SOME
POINT IN THE HISTORY OF
THIS ROCK—EVOLUTION
HAD A *HELPING HAND*.

WHATEVER
THE CASE...



...ITS
PRESENCE
HERE COULD
BE *DECISIVE*.

ASTROTRAIN—I WANT
A FULL TACTICAL
TOUR OF THE
INFILTRATION PHASE.

AT ONCE, LORD
MEGATRON.



WHERE *STARSCREAM*
SAW *VAINGLORIOUS*
SELF-ADVANCEMENT, I SEE
TOTAL LONG-TERM *VICTORY*.
THE STAGED PROCESS
HERE MUST BE *ADVANCED*.

PERHAPS
EVEN...

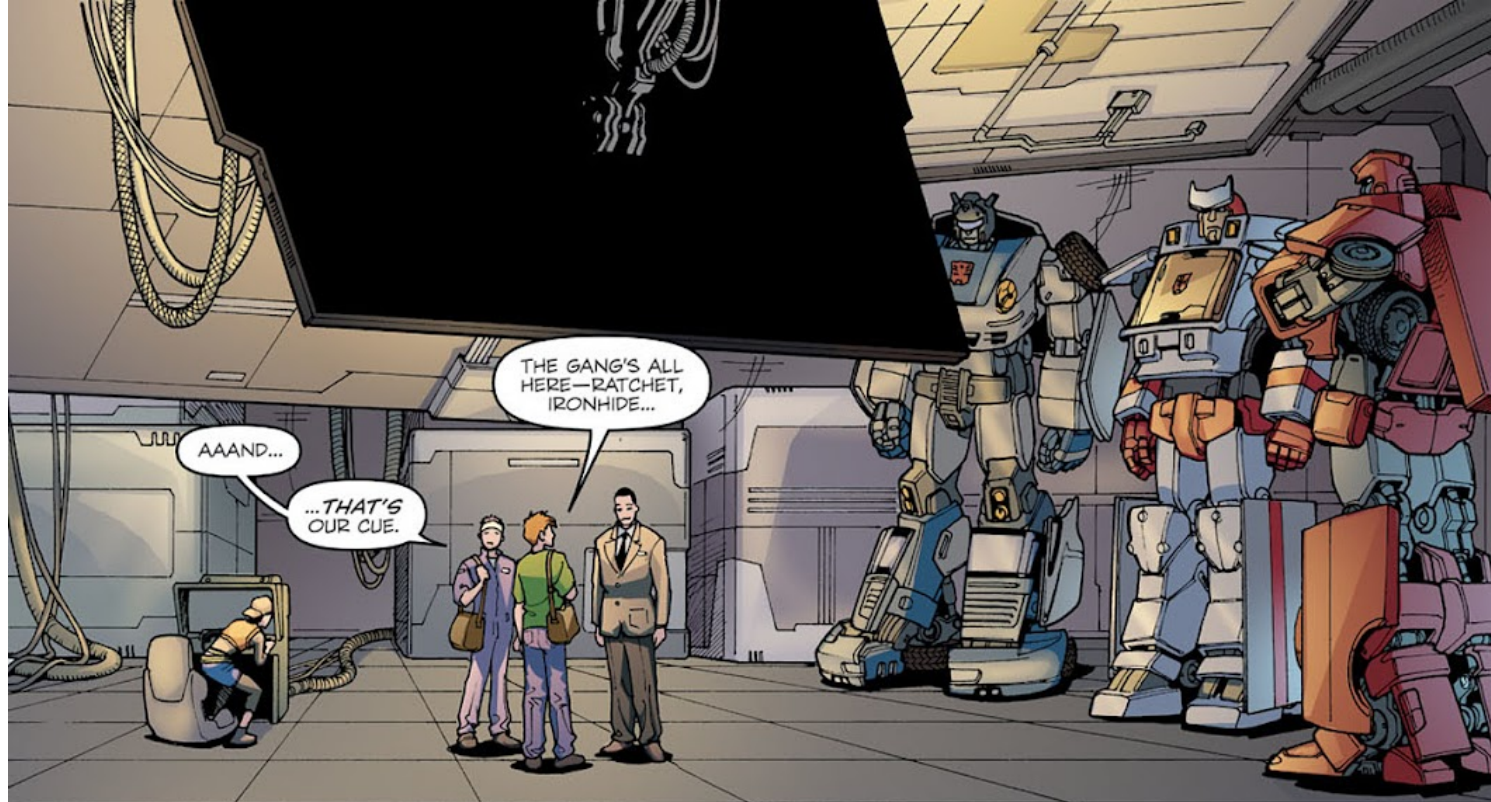


IMAGINE THE
EGO REQUIRED...

...TO DESIGN A
CONSOLE GAME AND
MAKE *YOURSELF*
THE STAR OF THE
SHOW!

STRANGE.
TO GO TO ALL THE
TROUBLE OF MAKING US
AS *COMFORTABLE*
AS POSSIBLE...





AAAND...

...THAT'S
OUR CUE.

THE GANG'S ALL
HERE—RATCHET,
IRONHIDE...



"...SUNSTREAKER?"

NOT MY IDEA. STILL
TRYING TO WORK OUT
EXACTLY WHAT I *DID* TO
TICK PROWL OFF.



IN HIS INFINITE
WISDOM, PROWL HAS
DECIDED SUNSTREAKER
AND IRONHIDE SHOULD
ESCORT YOU BACK TO
THE BIG, WIDE WORLD.

I SUSPECT IT'S HIS WAY
OF *PUNISHING* ME, FOR ALL
MY VARIOUS INDISCRETIONS.
ANYWAY, YOU...



...TAKE
CARE, ALL
OF YOU.

THAT IT?
GOOD. C'MON,
IRONHIDE...



...LET'S HIT
THE HIGHWAY!



...FOUND
SOMETHING. I'M
FASTTRACKING IT
TO YOUR SCANPOINT
SYSTEM...

...UP
TO HIS OLD
TRICKS AGAIN.
I'M BRINGING
HIM IN.

...STABILIZED,
BUT WE HAVE
ESCALATING
FLASHPOINTS IN...

...INFILTRATION
UNIT HAS GONE
TO GROUND.
AGAIN.

PRIME?



THE HUMANS
ARE GONE.

THANK YOU, PROWL.
IT'S IMPORTANT WE
MAINTAIN A HEALTHY
DISTANCE FROM ANY
INDIGENT SPECIES.
ESPECIALLY WHEN,
ULTIMATELY...



...WE MAY *NOT*
BE ABLE TO
SAVE THEM *OR*
THEIR WORLD.

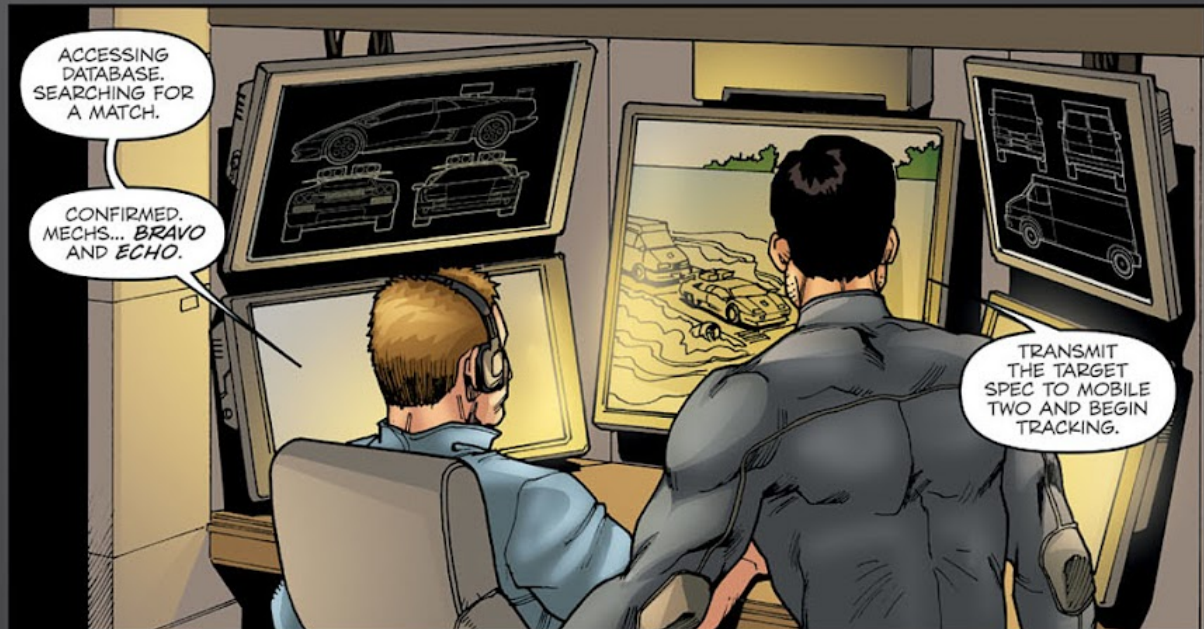


PROWL—DISTURBING
NEWS HAS JUST REACHED
ME. IT WOULD SEEM, FROM
PARTIALLY DECONSTRUCTED
FILES RECLAIMED FROM
BLUDGEON'S DATA-WELL
ON CYBERTRON...

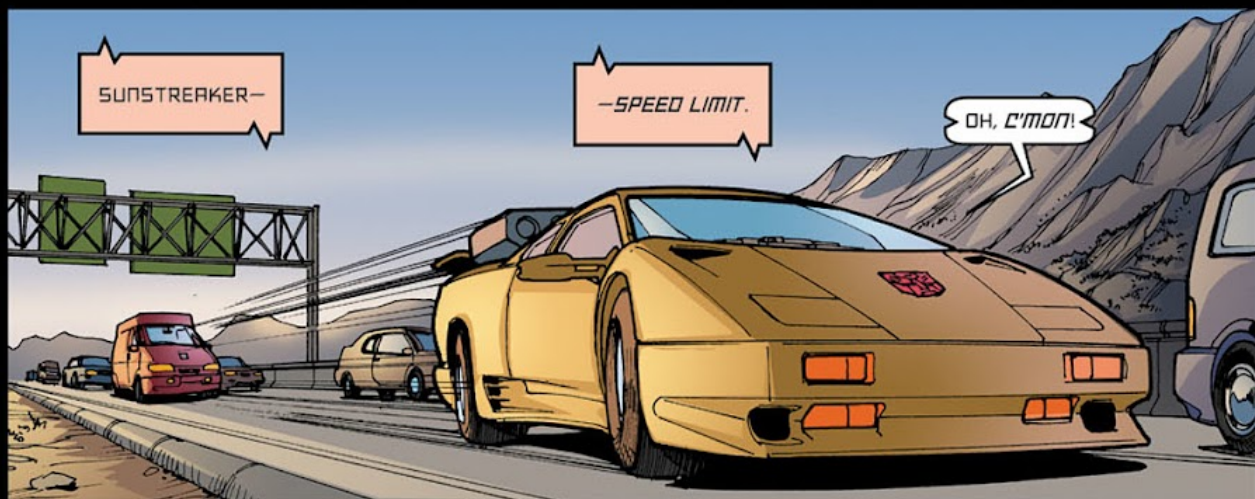
...WE ARE *NOT*
THE FIRST
CYBERTRONIANS
TO SET FOOT
ON EARTH.

JETFIRE FOUND
HISTORICAL REFERENCE
TO BOTH *SHOCKWAVE*
AND *SOUNDWAVE*.
THE QUESTION IS...

...WHERE ARE
THEY *NOW*?







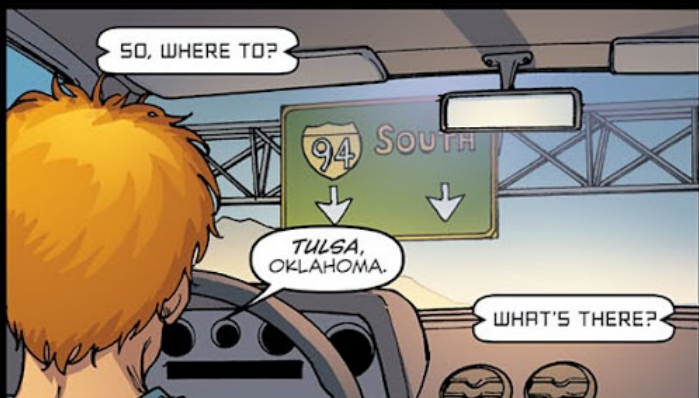
SUNSTREAKER—

—SPEED LIMIT.

OH, C'MON!



BAD ENOUGH I GOTTA SHARE MY *UPHOLSTERY* WITH A SPECIES THAT SHEDS SKIN ON A REGULAR BASIS, BUT NOW I GOTTA SUPER-SIZE THE EXPERIENCE?



SO, WHERE TO?

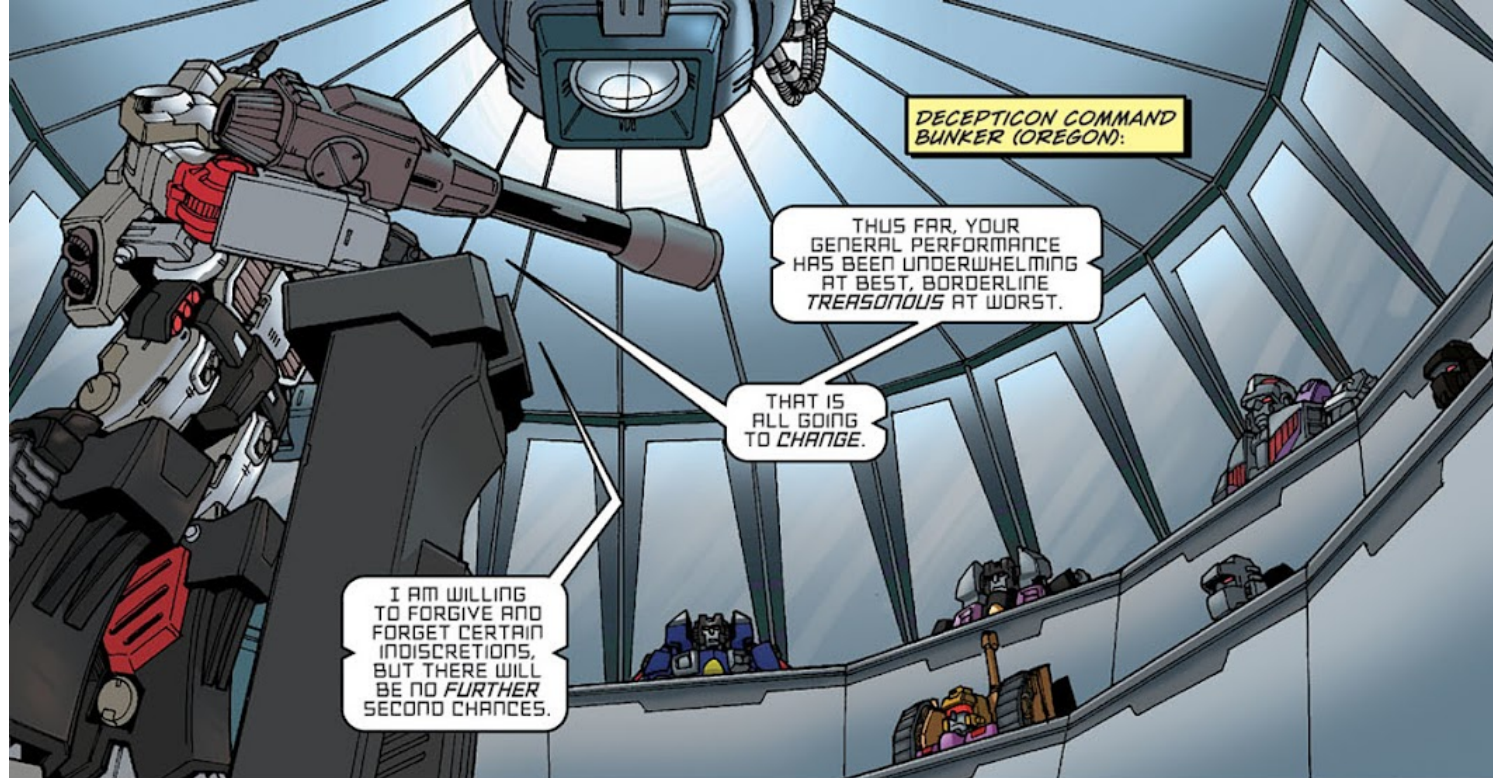
TULSA, OKLAHOMA.

WHAT'S THERE?



MY LIFE.





DECEPTICON COMMAND
BUNKER (OREGON):

THUS FAR, YOUR
GENERAL PERFORMANCE
HAS BEEN UNDERWHELMING
AT BEST, BORDERLINE
TREASONOUS AT WORST.

THAT IS
ALL GOING
TO *CHANGE*.

I AM WILLING
TO FORGIVE AND
FORGET CERTAIN
INDISCRETIONS,
BUT THERE WILL
BE NO *FURTHER*
SECOND CHANCES.



IS THAT
PLAINLY
UNDERSTOOD?



UH-HUH.

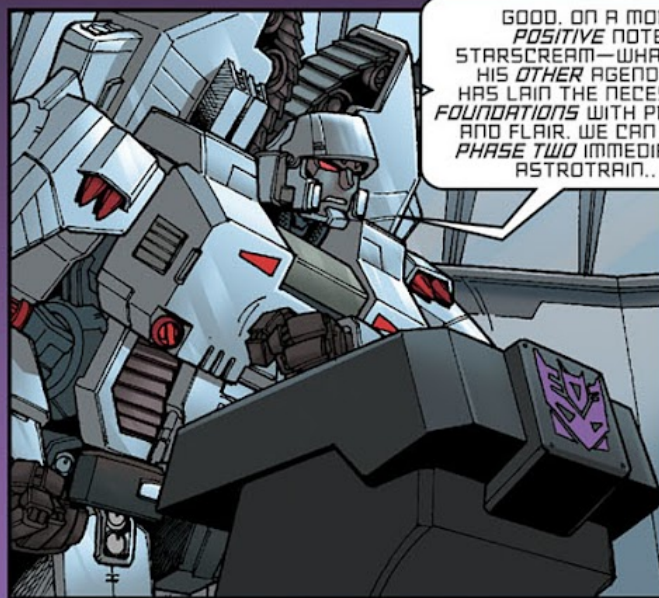
GOTCHA.

UNDERSTOOD.

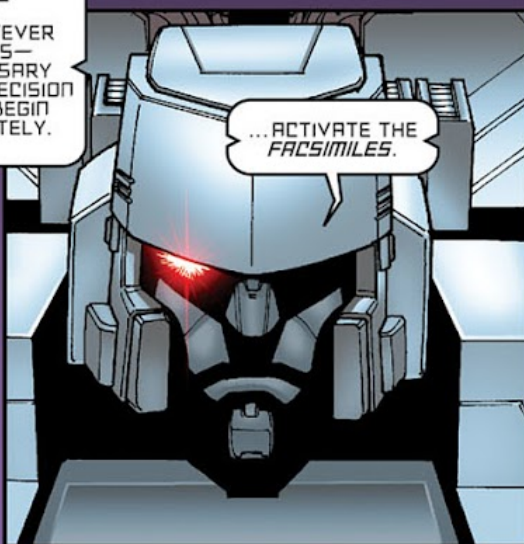
DITTO.

CRYSTAL.

CLEAR.



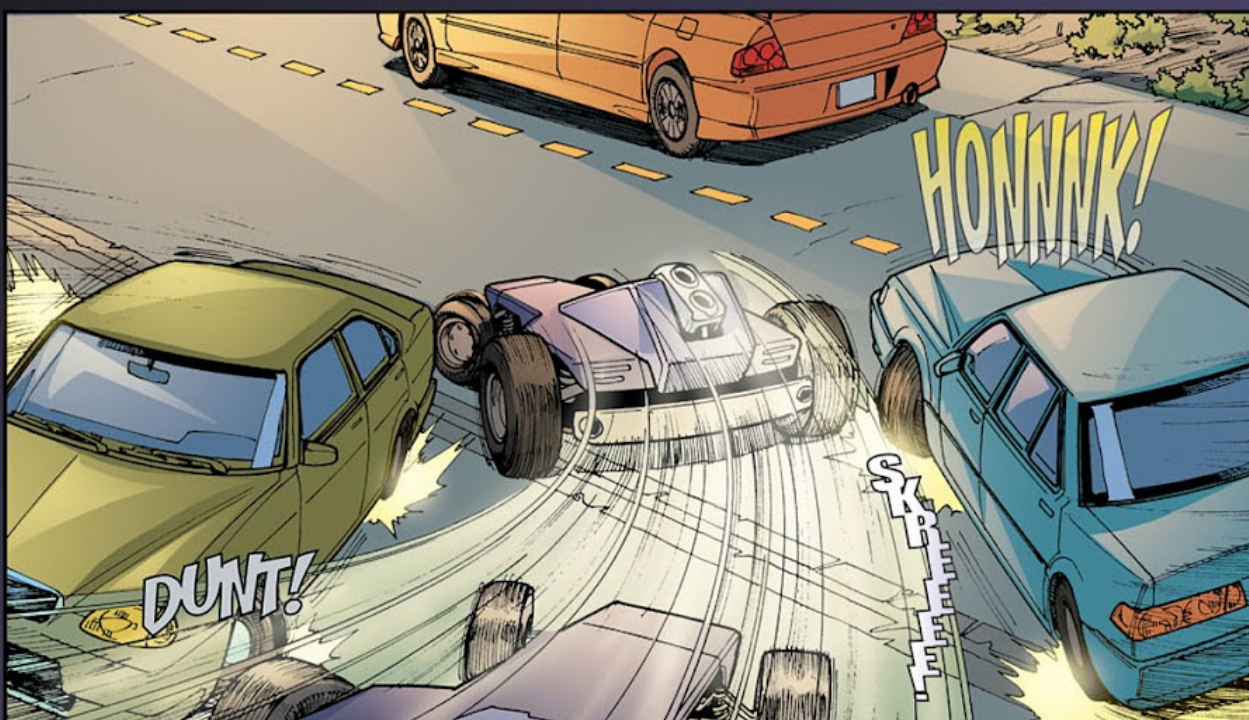
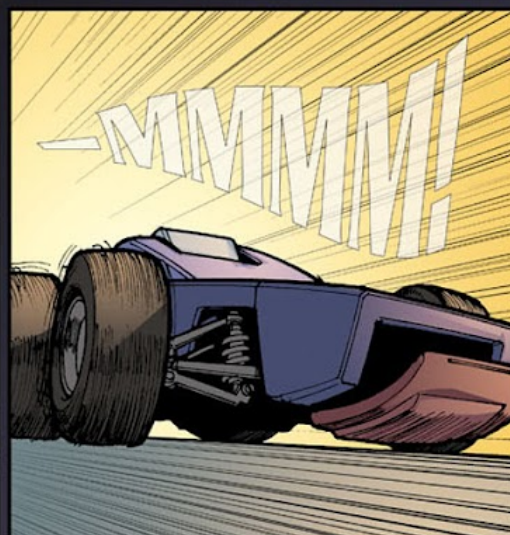
GOOD. ON A MORE
POSITIVE NOTE,
STARSCREAM—WHATEVER
HIS *OTHER* AGENDAS—
HAS LAID THE NECESSARY
FOUNDATIONS WITH PRECISION
AND FLAIR. WE CAN BEGIN
PHASE TWO IMMEDIATELY.
ASTROTRAIN...

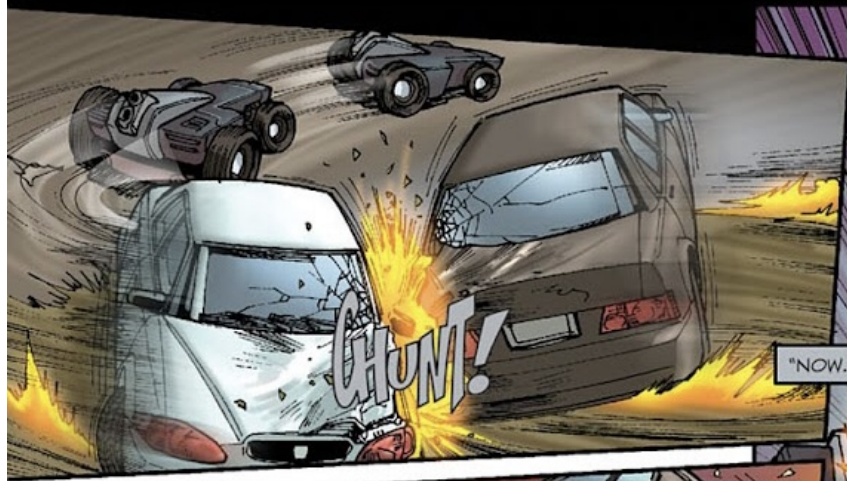


...ACTIVATE THE
FACSIMILES.



YEAH,
THIS IS
MOBILE TWO.
WE ARE IN
POSITION.





"NOW..."



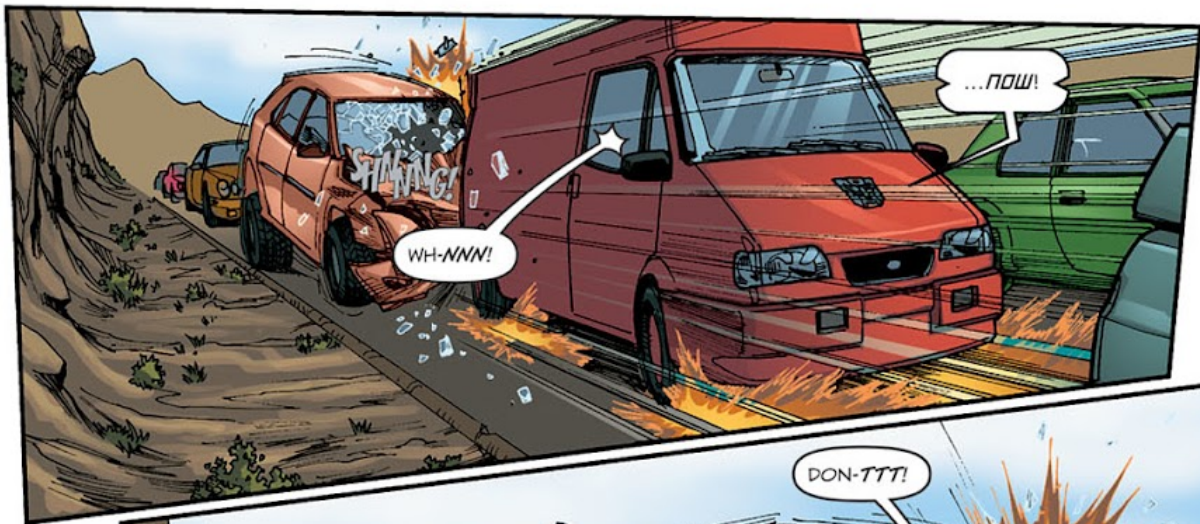
"...GIMME GRIDLOCK!"

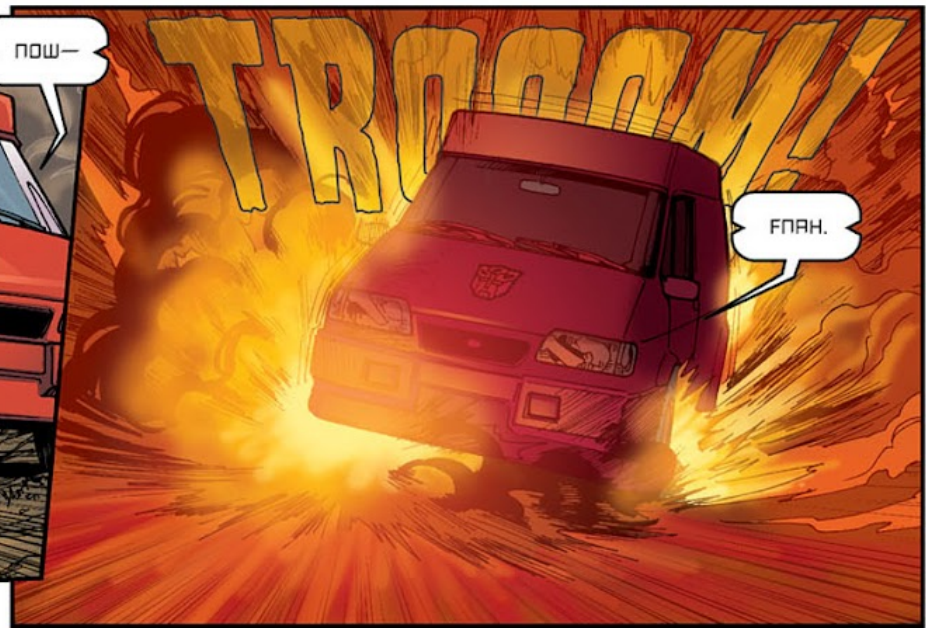


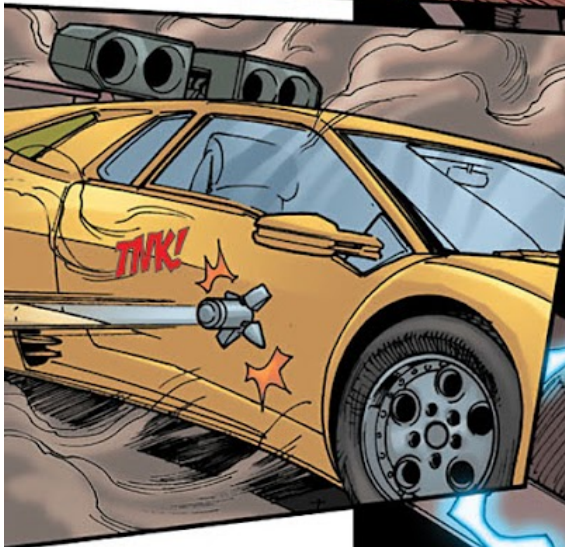
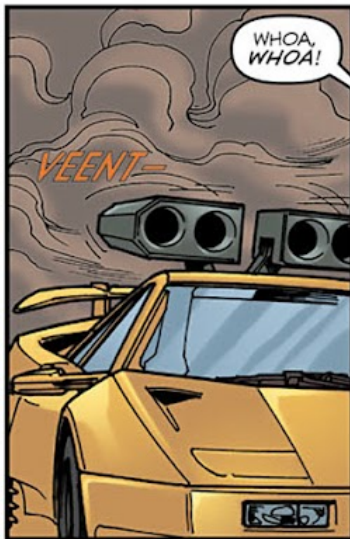
RIGHT.
EVERYONE
TO THEIR
MARKERS...

"...TARGET IS *IN* THE TUBE."









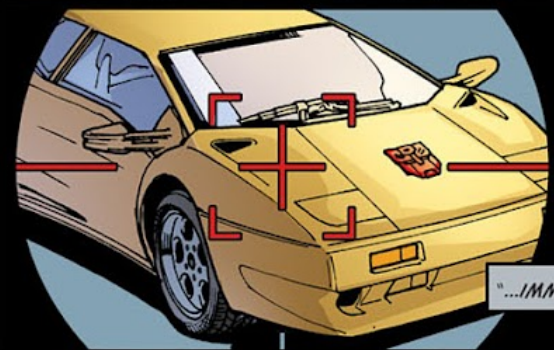


"THIS IS HOW IT GOES DOWN..."

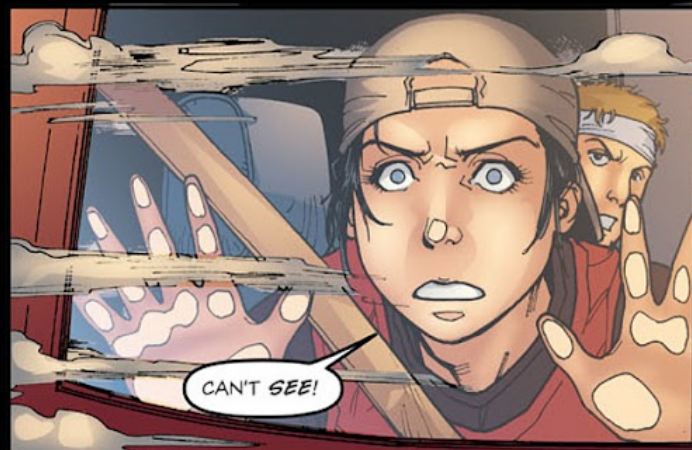


"ON THE OPEN ROAD, MAYBE JUST WITHIN SOME CITY LIMITS SOMEWHERE, THE TARGET IS ISOLATED..."

HAVE TO CUT ACROSS...



...IMMOBILIZED.



CAN'T SEE!

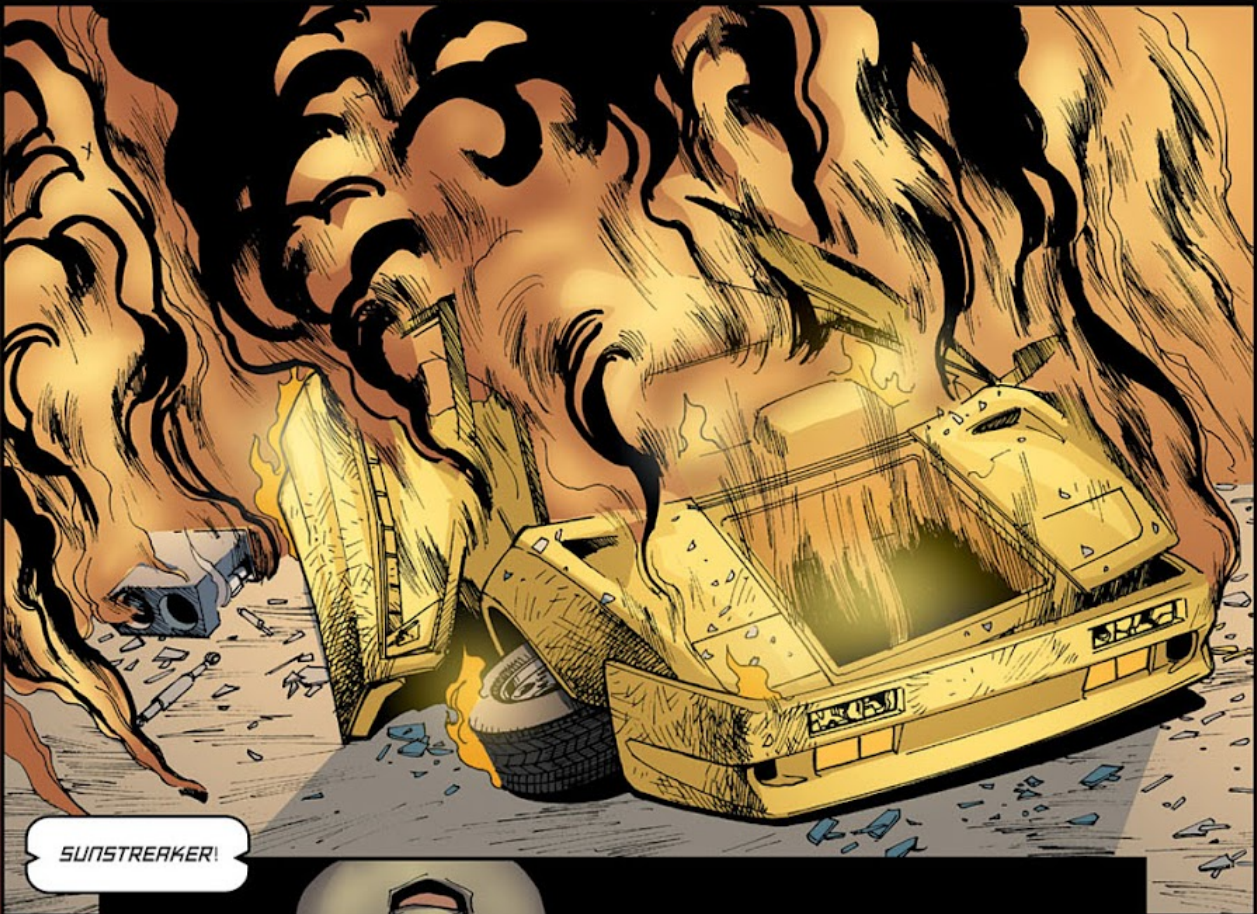
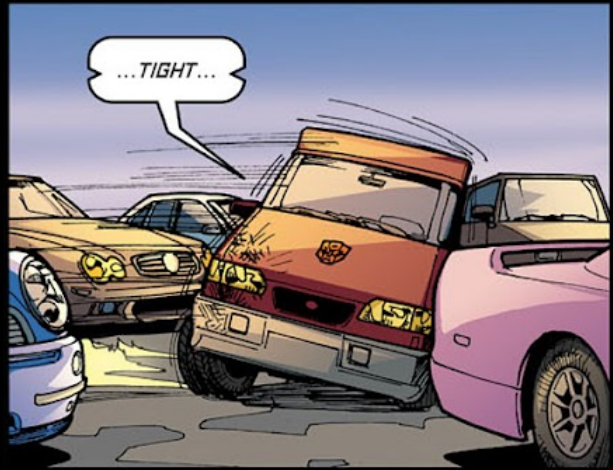


WHAT'S HAPPENING?



"THEN..."

WHOOOON!

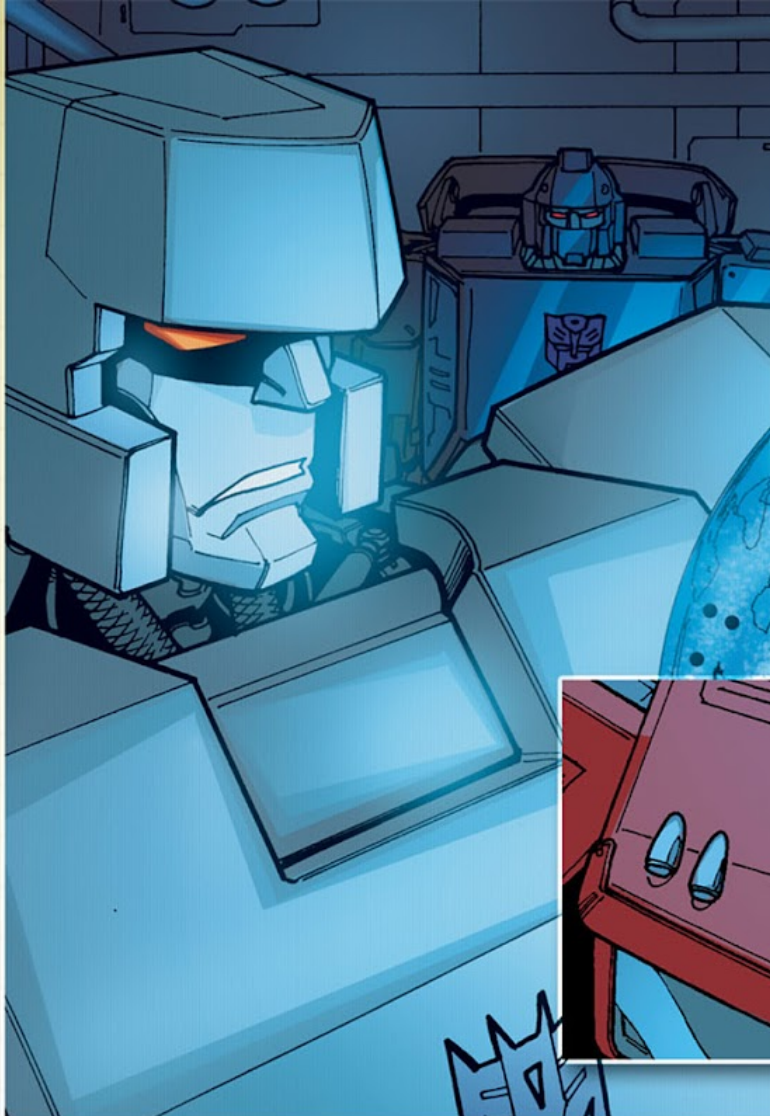


TO BE CONTINUED...



THE TRANSFORMERS ESCALATION





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ISSUE NUMBER TWO

ESCALATION:

The mysterious organization known as the Machination has struck! On the outskirts of Lebanon, Missouri, with controlled precision, AUTOBOT trooper SUNSTREAKER and his human passenger, HUNTER O'NION, have been ruthlessly taken out of the game! As OPTIMUS PRIME and the AUTOBOTS struggle to muster a response to the tragedy, so the DECEPTICONS—now under the direct command of MEGATRON—begin to transform their covert strategies to date into direct action of their own...

PHASE TWO CONTINUES...



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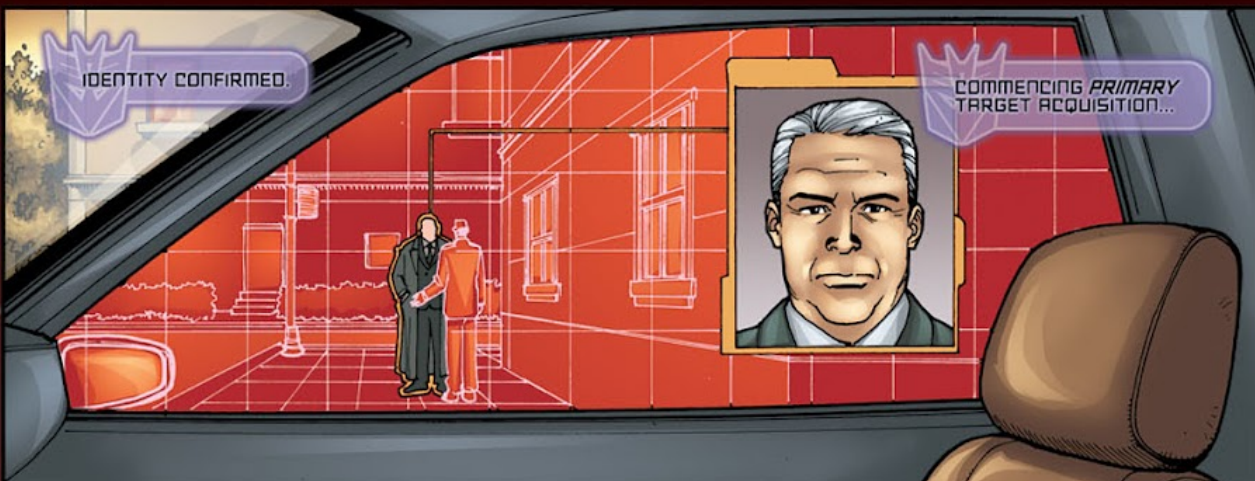
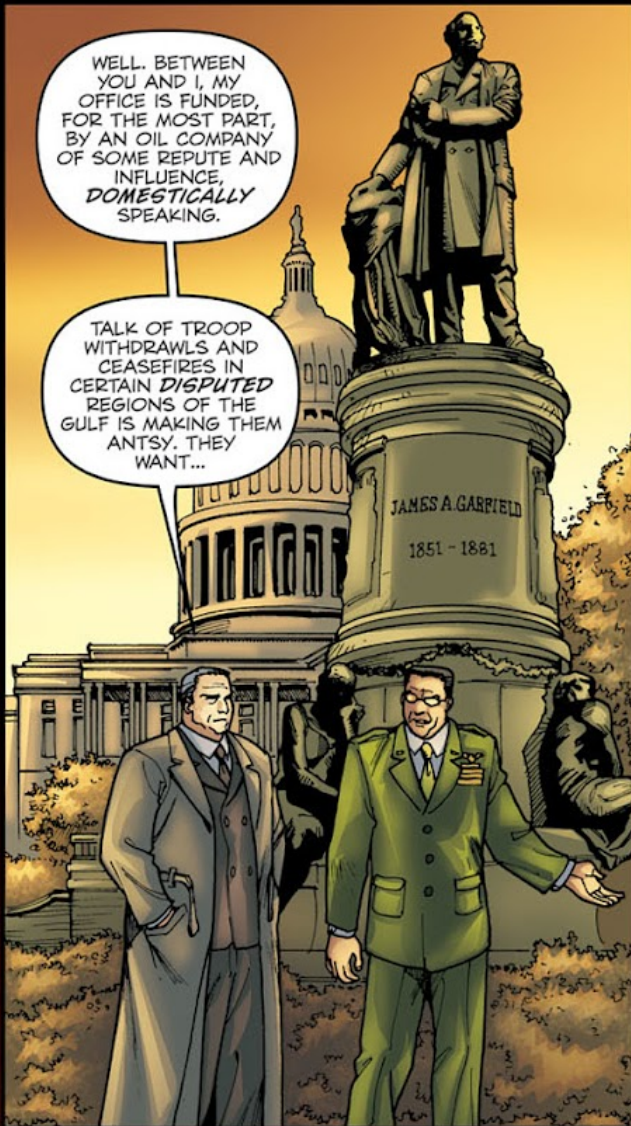
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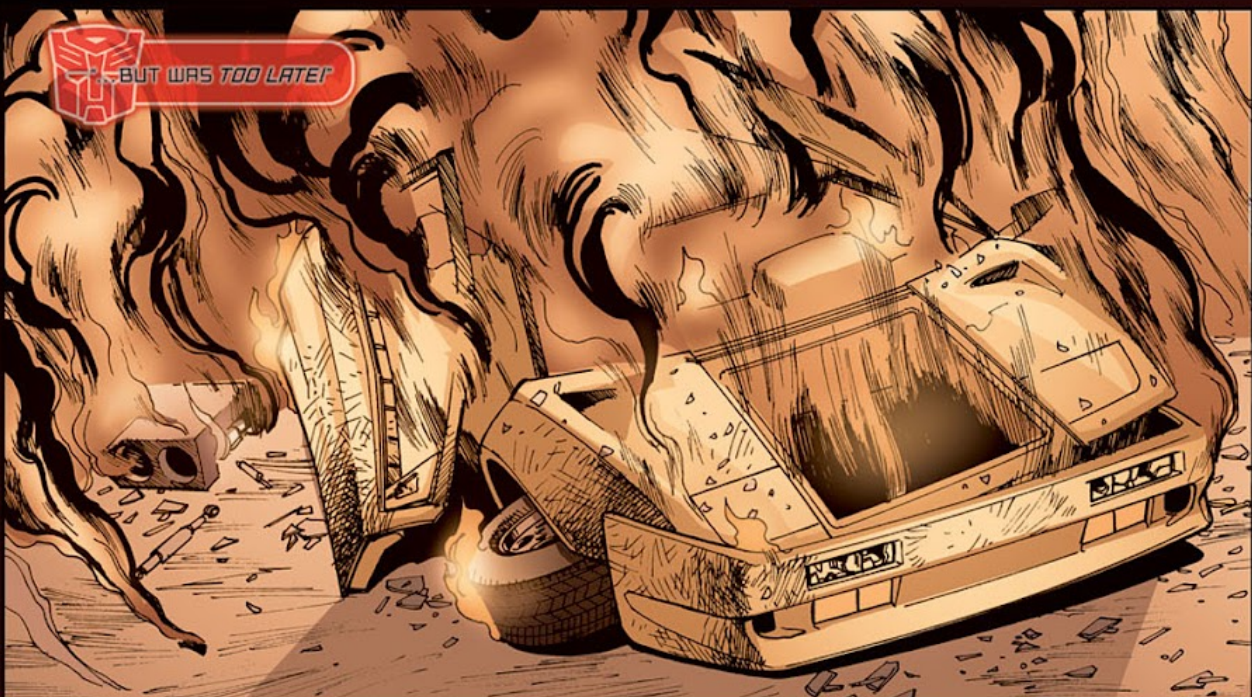
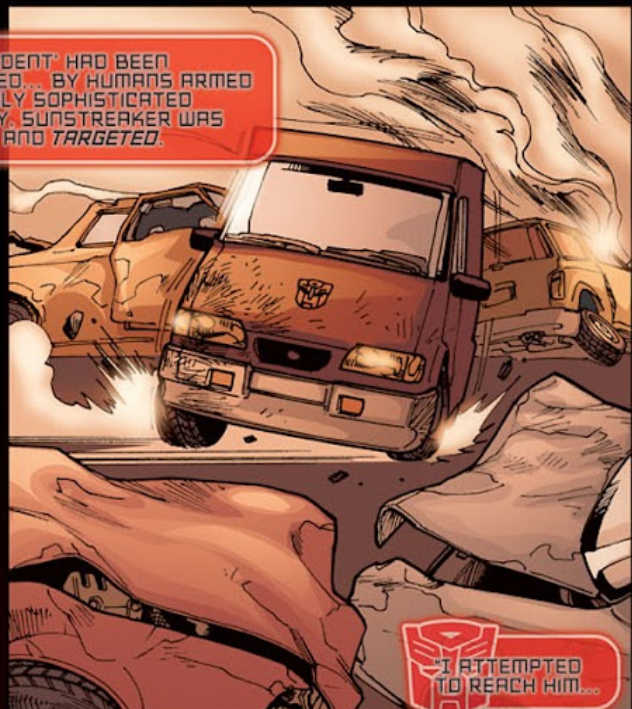
INTERSTATE I-57, JUST EAST
OF *ST. LOUIS* (NOW)...

ONCE AGAIN,
IRONHIDE, FROM
THE TOP...

PRIME? I'M... NOT
SURE I HAVE MUCH TO
ADD TO MY *ORIGINAL*
REPORT, BUT IF YOU
THINK IT WILL HELP...

I DO.



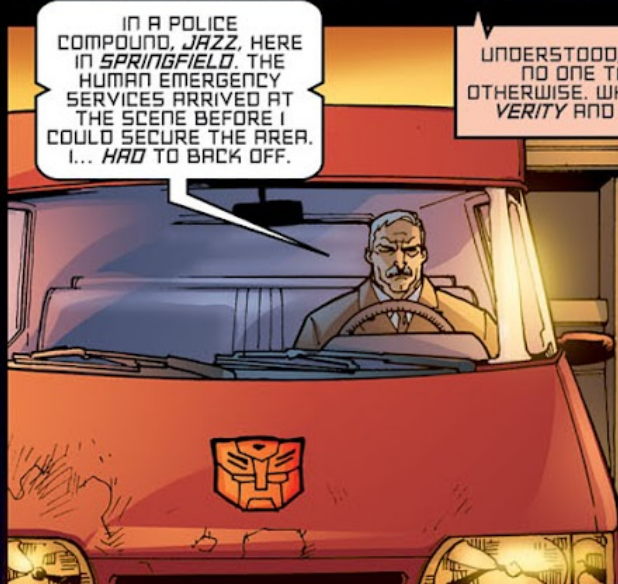




ANY CHANCE AT ALL HE WAS STILL FUNCTIONAL?

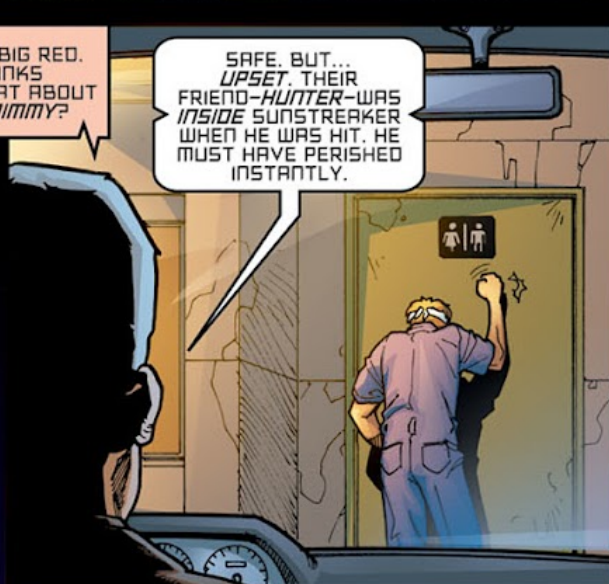
NONE. WHATEVER THEY HIT HIM WITH WAS **HARD-CORE**. THERE... **WASN'T** MUCH LEFT!

THE REMAINS?



IN A POLICE COMPOUND, **JAZZ**, HERE IN **SPRINGFIELD**, THE HUMAN EMERGENCY SERVICES ARRIVED AT THE SCENE BEFORE I COULD SECURE THE AREA. I... **HAD** TO BACK OFF.

UNDERSTOOD, BIG RED. NO ONE THINKS OTHERWISE. WHAT ABOUT **VERITY** AND **JIMMY**?



SAFE. BUT... **UPSET**. THEIR FRIEND-**HUNTER**-WAS **INSIDE** **SUNSTREAKER** WHEN HE WAS HIT. HE MUST HAVE PERISHED INSTANTLY.



PRIME...

...THIS **HAS** TO BE A **DECEPTICON** ORCHESTRATED ASSAULT. THE WEAPONS USED WERE TAILOR-MADE FOR THE JOB. THEY KNEW EXACTLY **WHERE** AND **HOW** TO HURT US.

I SAY WE TAKE THIS RIGHT TO THEIR DOOR... AND **KICK IT IN!**

NO. **ABSOLUTELY NOT!**



IT MIGHT NOT BE THE DECEPTICONS AT ALL, AND EVEN IF IT IS, A KNEE-JERK RESPONSE MAY BE *EXACTLY* WHAT THEY WANT.

IRONHIDE, GET THE HUMANS BACK TO *ARK-19*, IN CASE THIS *WAS* SOME KIND OF REPRISAL.

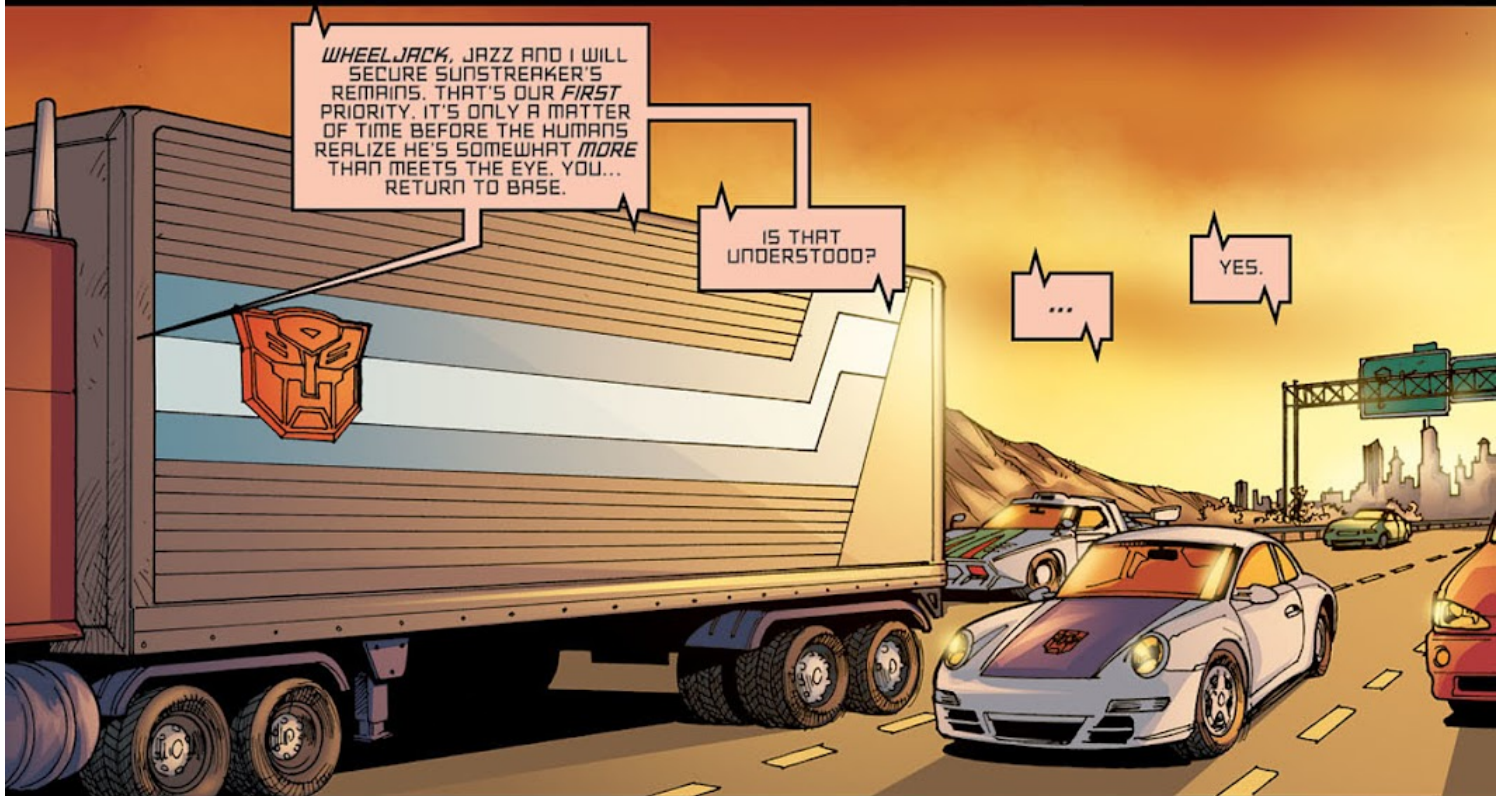
BUT, PRIME—

WHEELJACK, JAZZ AND I WILL SECURE SUNSTREAKER'S REMAINS. THAT'S OUR *FIRST* PRIORITY. IT'S ONLY A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE THE HUMANS REALIZE HE'S SOMEWHAT *MORE* THAN MEETS THE EYE. YOU... RETURN TO BASE.

IS THAT UNDERSTOOD?

...

YES.



DAMN AND BLAST.



VERITY?
VERITY?

POINTLESS ASKING IF YOU'RE OKAY. PERSONALLY I'M PRETTY FREAKIN' FAR FROM OKAY. BUT, HEY...



...TALK TO ME.

OREGON (DECEPTICON
COMMAND BUNKER):

TALK
TO ME...

WE'RE SET. JUST
GIVE THE WORD...

THE WORD,
SKYWARP...

...IS GIVEN. DO
NOT DISAPPOINT
ME. AGAIN.

RIGHT, YEAH.
SKYWARP OUT.

I TELL YOU,
THUNDERCRACKER,
HE'S *DEFINITELY*
GOT IT IN FOR ME...
FOR ALL OF US!

CAN YOU
BLAME HIM?

AFTER ALL, WE *DID*
TRY TO USURP HIS
OVERALL COMMAND. YOU
EVEN HAD THE GALL TO
LOCK WEAPONS ON HIM!
YOU'RE LUCKY HE PUT YOU
IN A *C.R.** CHAMBER...

*CRYOGENIC
REGENERATION

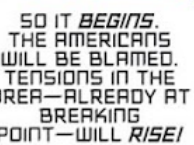


...AND NOT
THE GROUND!

FEH. COULD
BE WORSE,
I SUPPOSE...



...COULD BE
STARSCREAM.



SO IT *BEGINS*.
THE AMERICANS
WILL BE BLAMED.
TENSIONS IN THE
AREA—ALREADY AT
BREAKING
POINT—WILL *RISE!*

*RUNABOUT,
RUNAMUCK...*

...SEE THAT
YOUR PUPPETS
DANCE TO THE TUNE
THEY WERE TAUGHT.
DO *NOT* IMPROVISE.

YES,
MEGATRON.

NO,
MEGATRON.

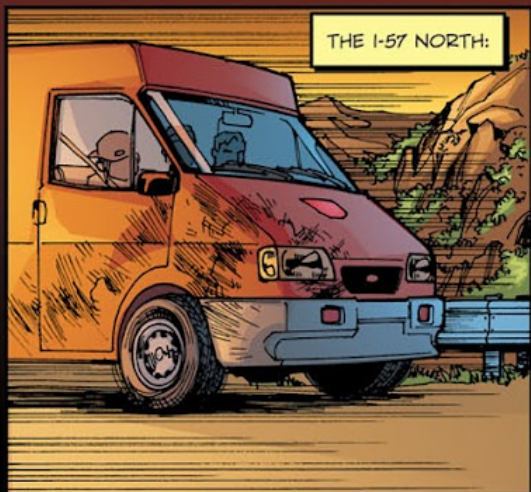
WITH *PHASE TWO*
SET IN MOTION, I
SHOULD SIMPLY
WITHDRAW AND
INSTALL A *NEW* UNIT
COMMANDER.

BUT?

...I SUPPOSE IT
WOULDN'T HURT TO
LINGER A *WHILE*
LONGER, IF NOTHING
ELSE TO TRY OUT
THIS *INTRIGUING* NEW
EXO-STRUCTURE.

I WONDER...

...WHERE
SHALL I
PLAY...



THE I-57 NORTH:



I DON'T *GET* IT, IRONHIDE. HOW COULD IT *BE* THE DECEPTICONS?

THOSE GUYS WERE FLESH AND BLOOD, NO QUESTION.



THING IS, JIMMY, THEY MIGHT NOT HAVE BEEN. NOT ENTIRELY.

THE DECEPTICONS EMPLOY *FACSIMILE AVATARS*, BIO-TECHNOLOGICAL ORGANISMS GROWN IN FUSION TUBES.

AND THESE FACSIMILES, THEY LOOK LIKE US?

LOOK LIKE YOU, THINK LIKE YOU. MANY ARE IMPLANTED WITH ACTUAL MEMORY ENGRAMS, TAKEN FROM THE ORIGINAL SUBJECT. UNTIL THEY'RE ACTIVATED, THEY DON'T EVEN *KNOW* THEY'RE ARTIFICIAL.

EESH.

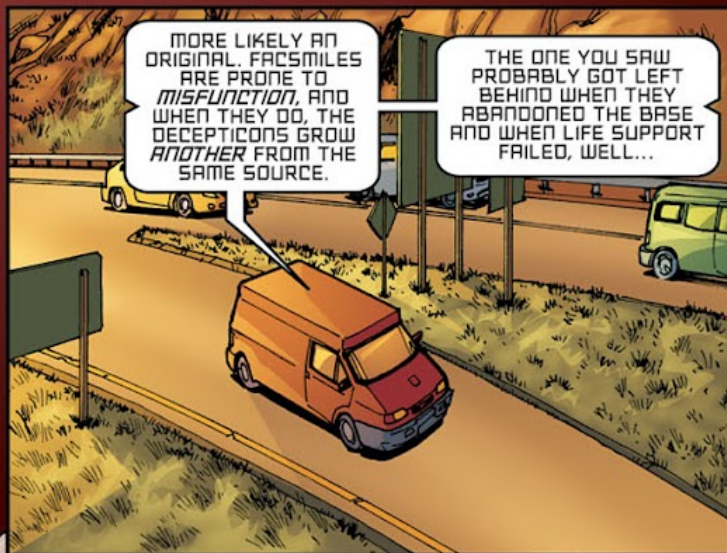


WAS...

WAS THAT WHAT I SAW IN NEBRASKA?



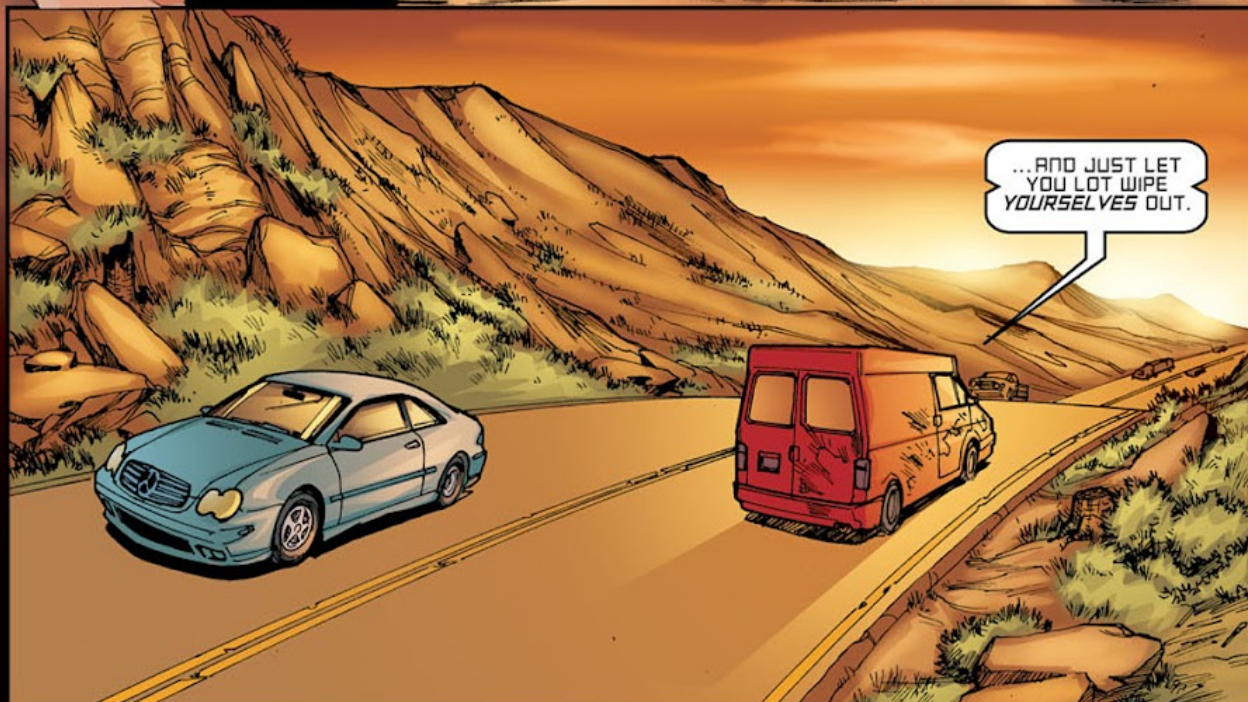
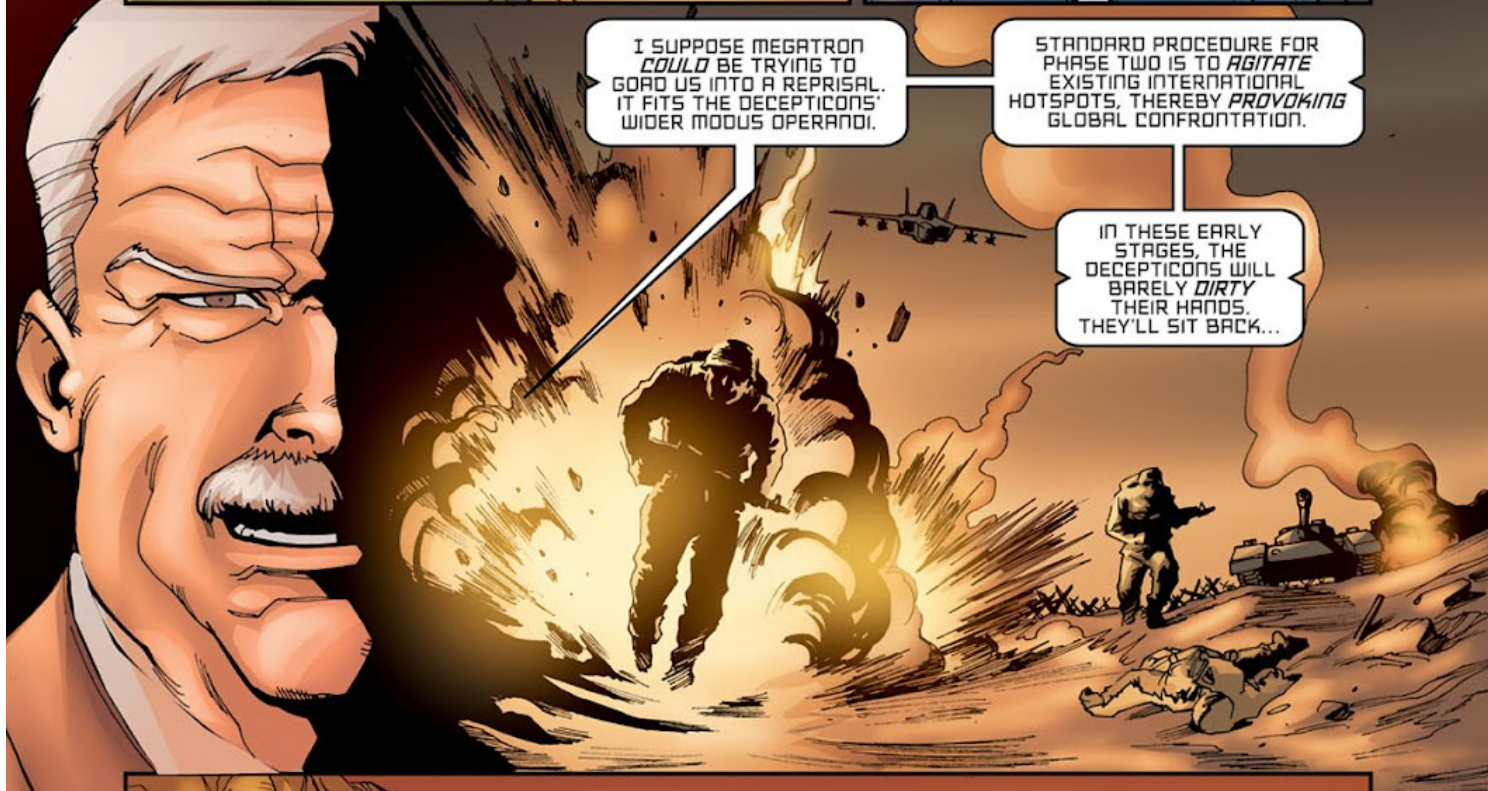
A FACSIMILE?



THE ONE YOU SAW PROBABLY GOT LEFT BEHIND WHEN THEY ABANDONED THE BASE AND WHEN LIFE SUPPORT FAILED, WELL...



...IS IF IT WAS THE DECEPTICONS WHO ATTACKED US, WHAT WERE THEY TRYING TO ACHIEVE?



...AND JUST LET YOU LOT WIPE YOURSELVES OUT.



SPRINGFIELD PD,
IMPOUND LOT:

THIS IS
THE PLACE.
WHEELJACK...



NO SIGN OF
SUNSTREAKER'S
MORTAL REMAINS,
JAZZ. HE MUST BE
WITHIN THE MAIN
STRUCTURE.

SECURITY?

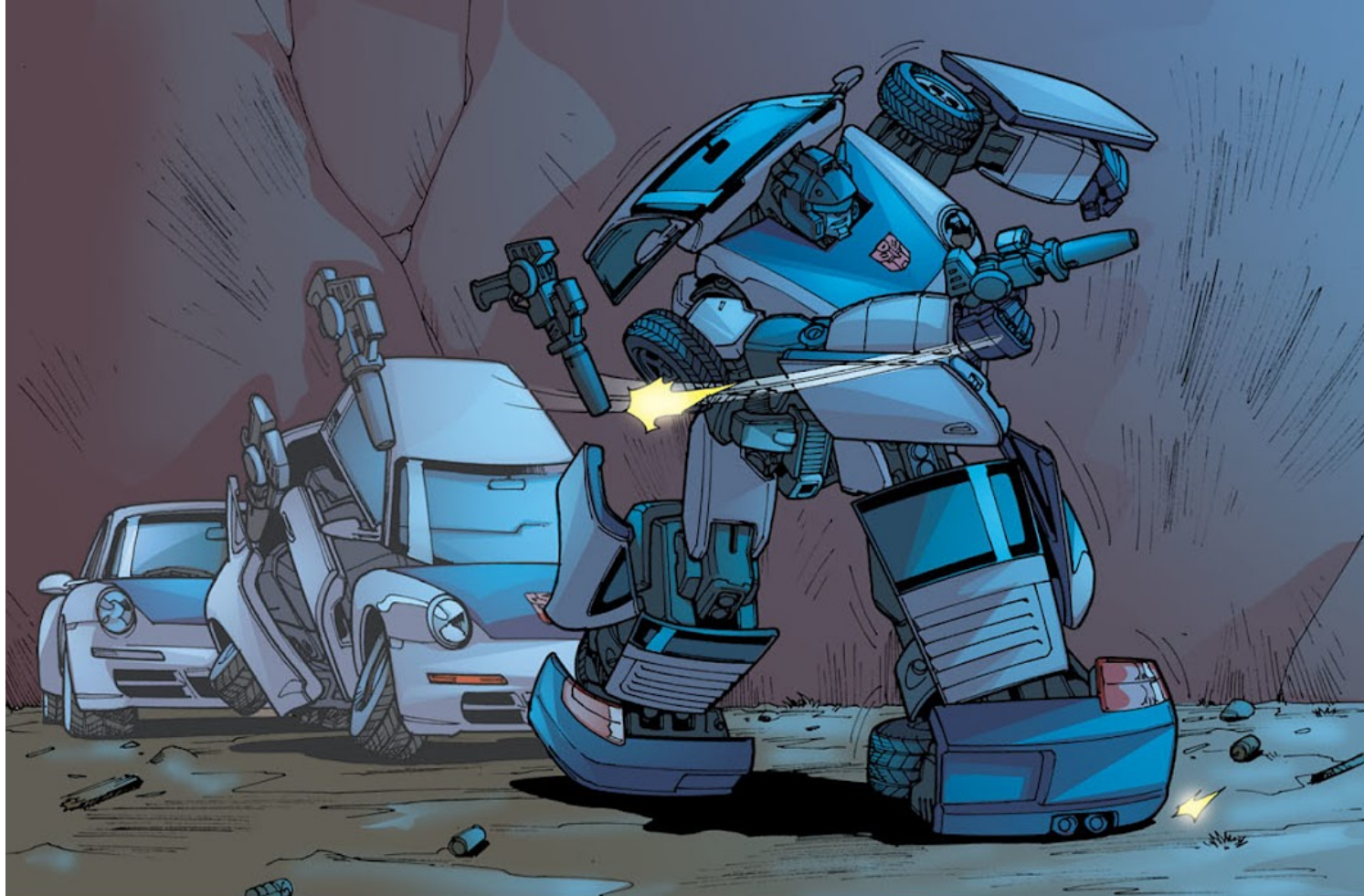
MINIMAL. PERIMETER
FENCE IS ALARMED AND
THERE'S CCTV. I CAN
TAKE OUT *BOTH* WITH
A LOCALIZED EMP.



DO IT, M'MAN. THERE'S
AN OBSERVATION
BLIND SPOT FORTY
METERS ALONG THE
WEST PERIMETER.
I'LL GO IN THERE.

ACKNOWLEDGED.
SEE YOU ON
THE INSIDE.









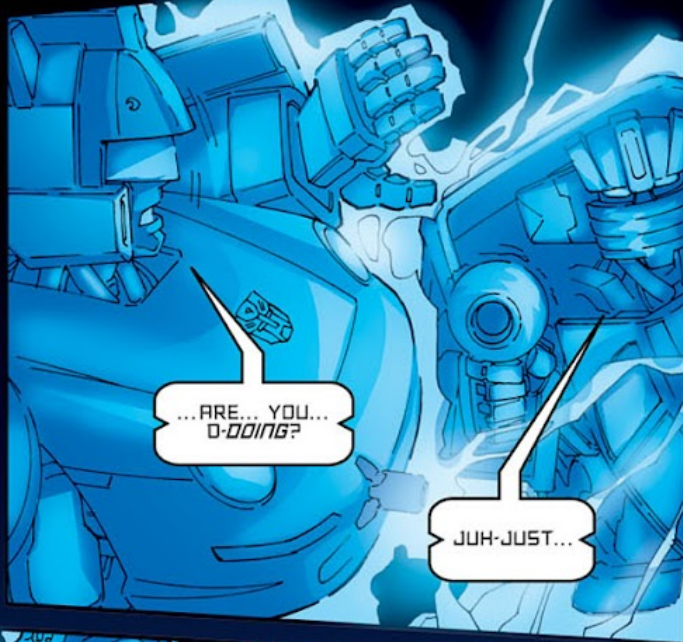
NOW, WHILE THEY'RE ON ROPES...

...PUT 'EM DOWN.

CHT!



NUH-NOTHING'S WHRRRING!
WUH-WHEELJACK...
WHAT...



...ARE... YOU...
D-DOING?

JUH-JUST...

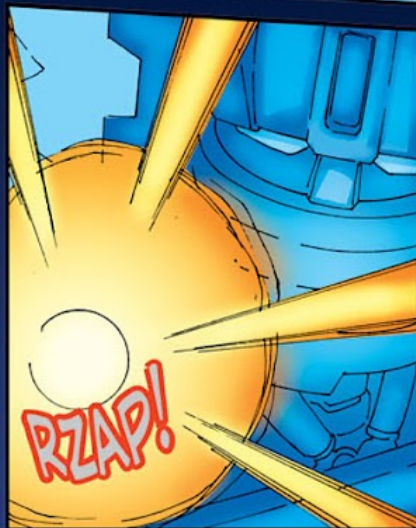


... K-K-KEEP...
STILL...

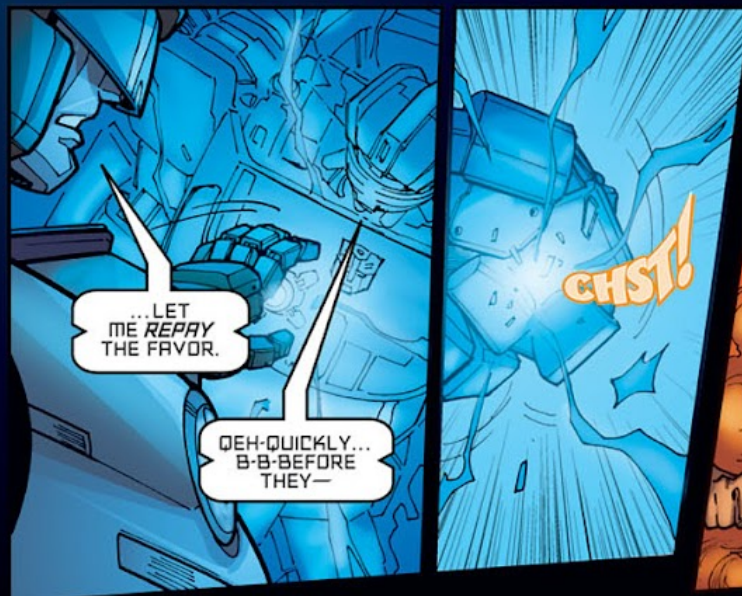


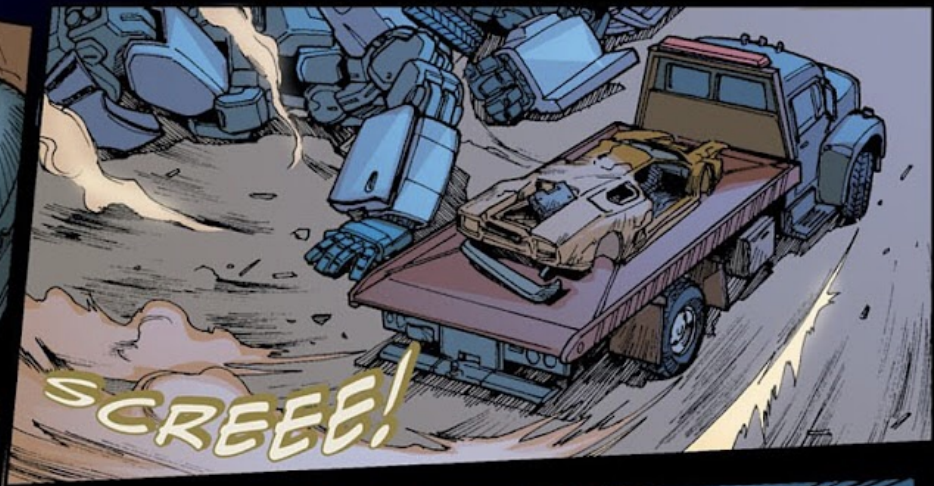
K-K-KEEP
STILL?

YUH'VE G-G-GOT
TO BE K-K-KIDDING!



RZAP!

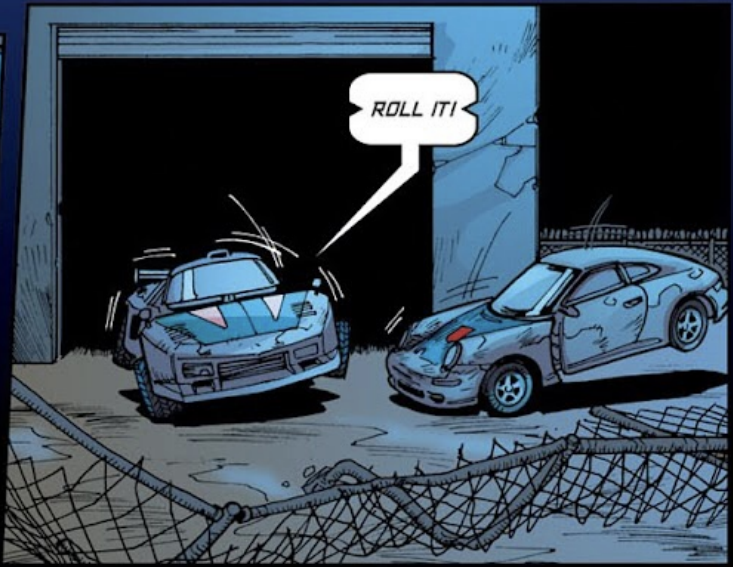






WHAT?

OH. OH!





ENH! WHOEVER
THEY ARE,
WHEELJACK...



... THEY *DON'T*
BELIEVE IN
LEAVING LOOSE
ENDS!

PRIME—THIS IS
WHEELJACK.
YOU HAVE ONE
HOSTILE...



HOO-HAH!

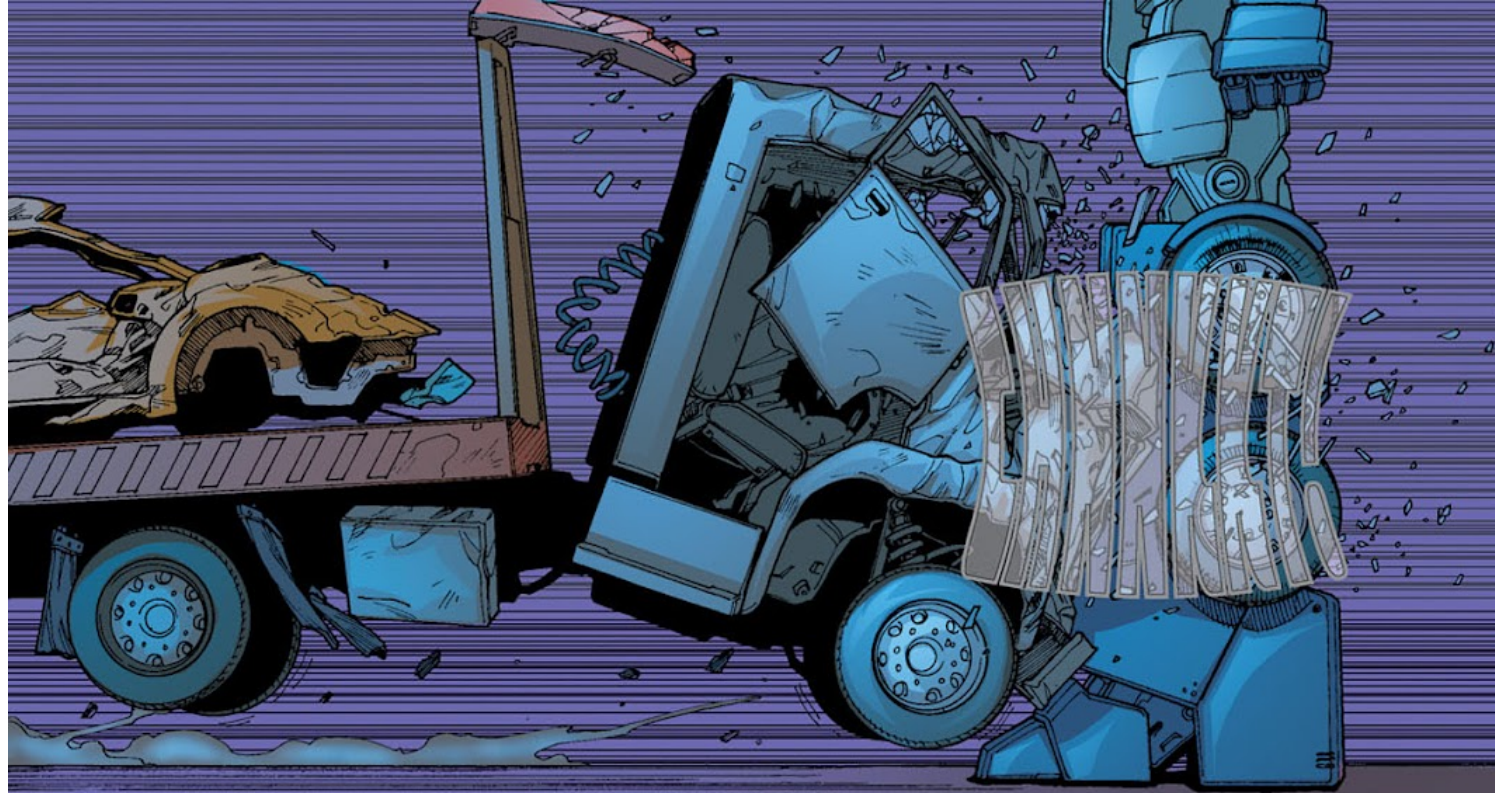


CALL ME
IMMATURE...

...BUT I DO
LOVE THE
FIREWORKS!



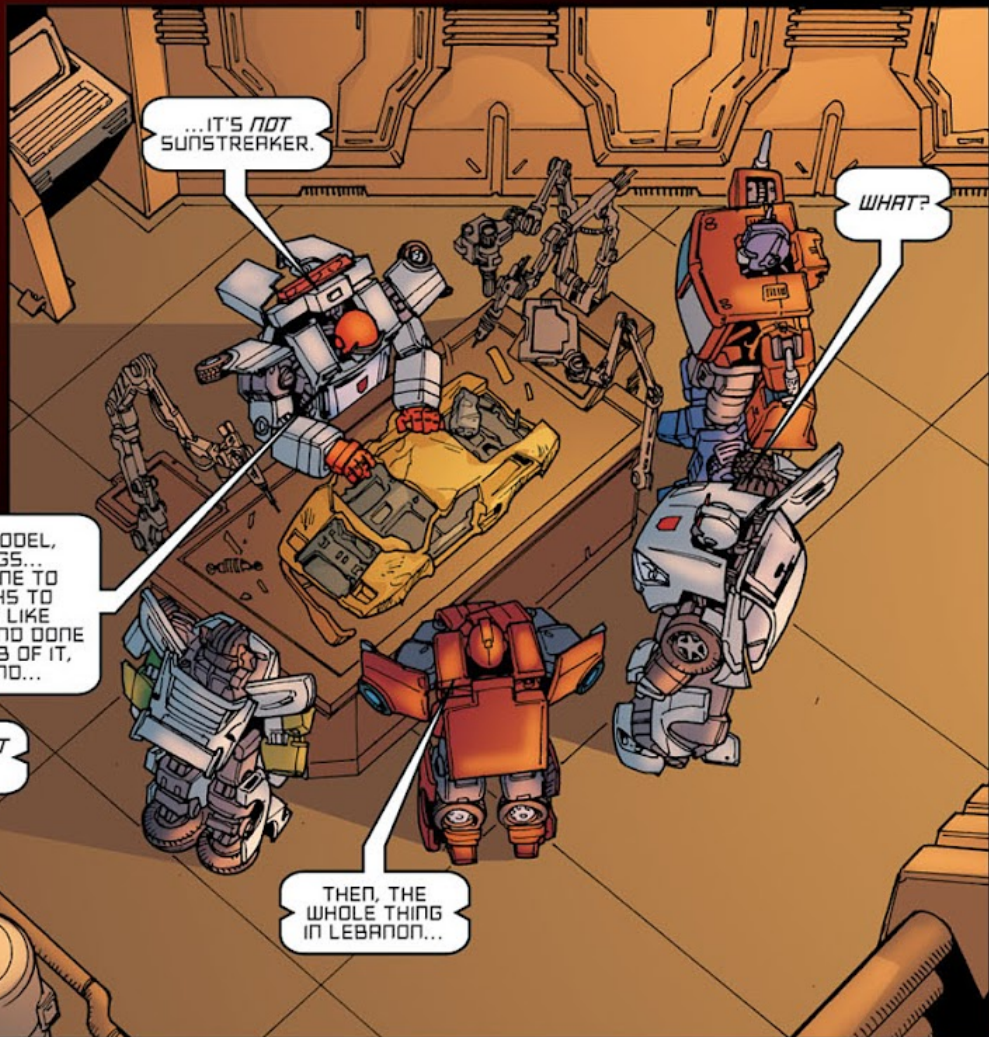
WHAM-BA—





ARK-19:

INSTANT
DIAGNOSIS...



...IT'S *NOT*
SUNSTREAKER.

WHAT?

SAME MAKE/MODEL,
SAME STYLINGS...
SOMEONE'S GONE TO
GREAT LENGTHS TO
MAKE IT *LOOK* LIKE
SUNSTREAKER, AND DONE
A PASSABLE JOB OF IT,
BUT IN THE END...

...IT'S *JUST*
A CAR.

THEN, THE
WHOLE THING
IN LEBANON...



...WAS
STAGED?!

BUT... *WHY*? WHY
BOTHR WITH THIS
ELABORATE
INTERCEPTION AND
COVER-UP?



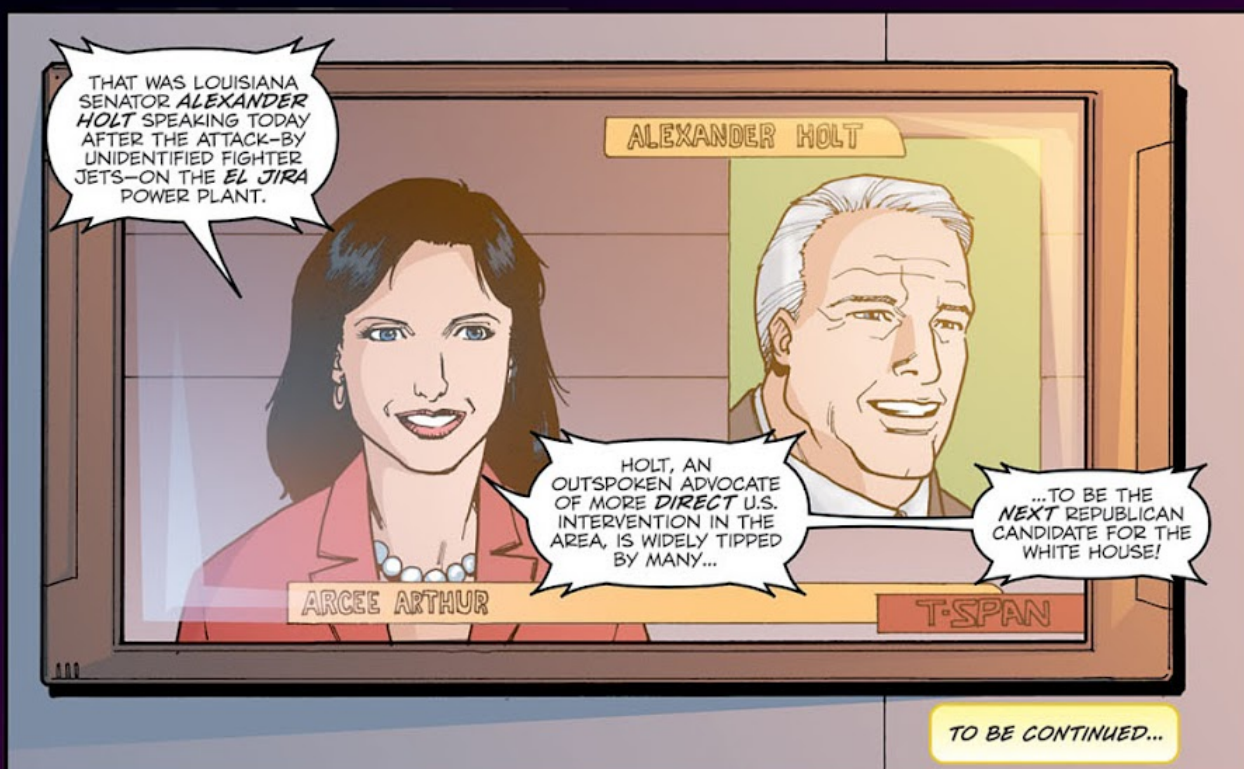
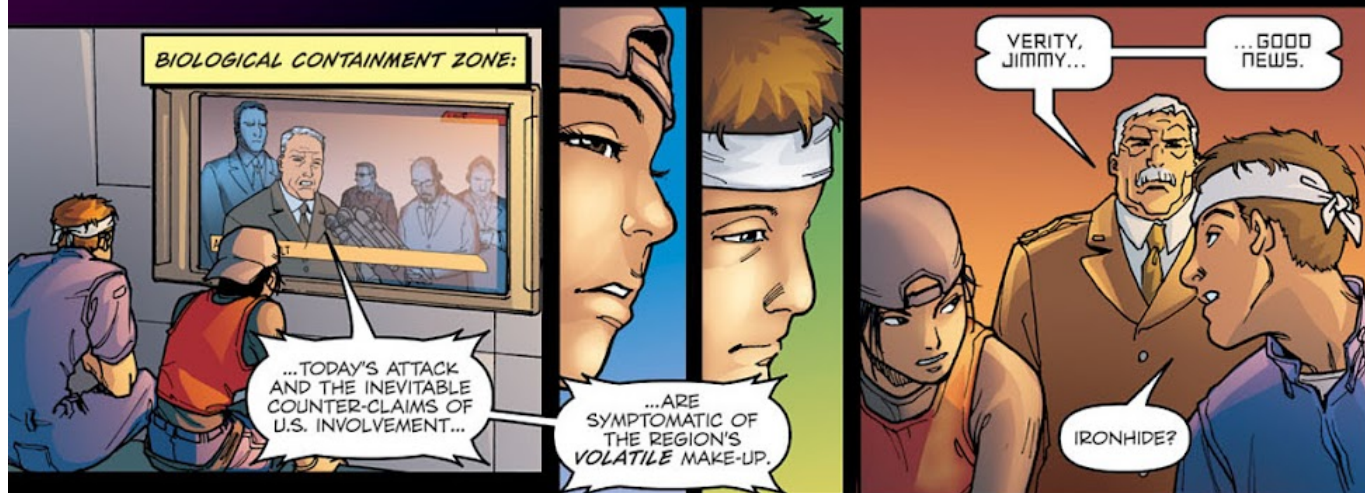
BECAUSE, PROWL,
THEY KNEW THAT THE
ONLY WAY WE'D STOP
LOOKING FOR
SUNSTREAKER... IS IF
WE THOUGHT HE WAS
ALREADY DEAD.

THE REAL
QUESTION
IS... WHO?



STRANGELY, I
ALMOST HOPE IT IS
THE DECEPTICONS.
BECAUSE IF IT'S
HUMANS, IF THEY
ALREADY KNOW *THIS*
MUCH ABOUT US...

...WE'RE
MORE *EXPOSED*
THAN WE'VE
EVER BEEN!





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ESCALATION



THE TRANSFORMERS™



ESCALATION

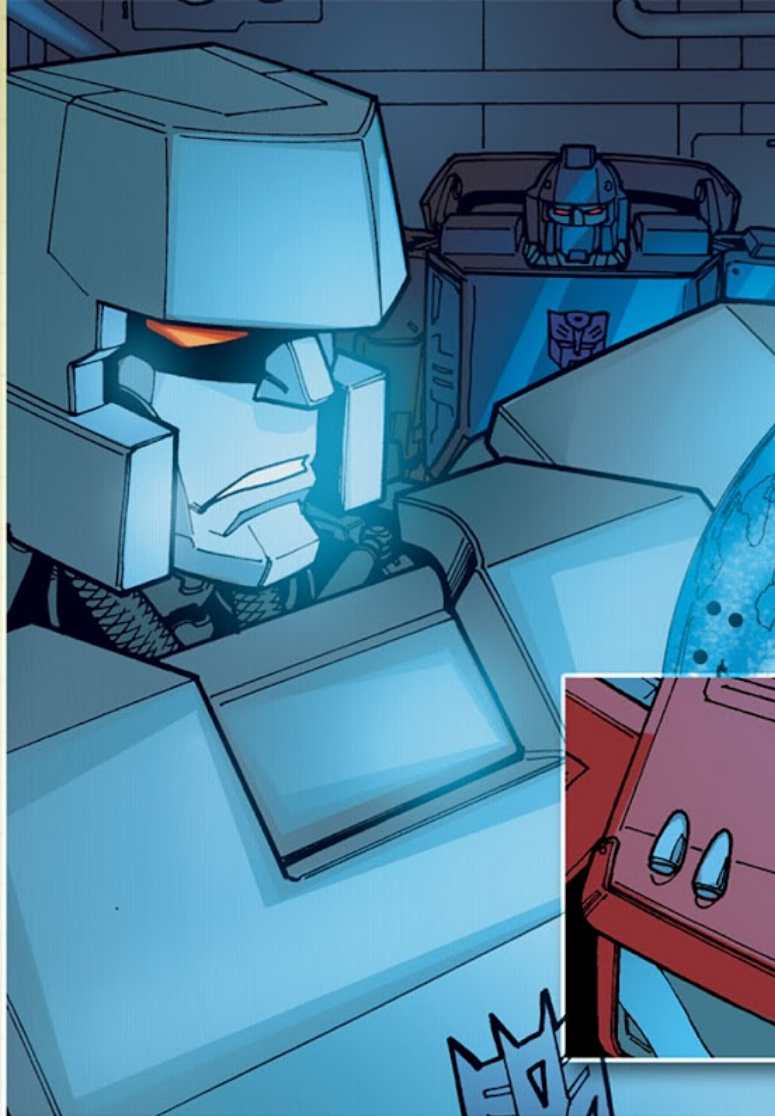


ISSUE 43
R/CVR

THE TRANSFORMERS™



ESCALATION



THE TRANSFORMERS ESCALATION

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ART BY : **E.J. SU**

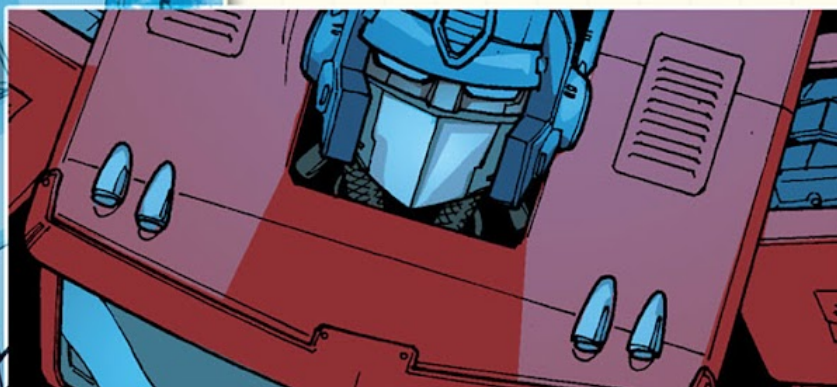
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VARIANT COVER BY : **KLAUS SCHERWINSKI**



ISSUE NUMBER THREE

ESCALATION:

As the AUTOBOTS begin to probe the mysterious abduction (and fate) of SUNSTREAKER and his passenger, Hunter O'Nion, MEGATRON gets hands-on with the escalating DECEPTICON infiltration strategy on Earth. Having upgraded to an immensely powerful new Earth form, MEGATRON sets his sights on the breakaway soviet state of Brasnya and one of the many facsimile (artificial) humans carefully integrated into that particular hot spot. Things... are about to go ballistic!

PHASE TWO CONTINUES...



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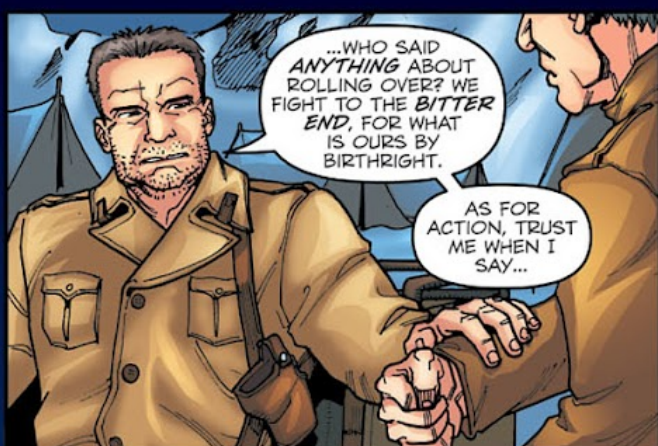
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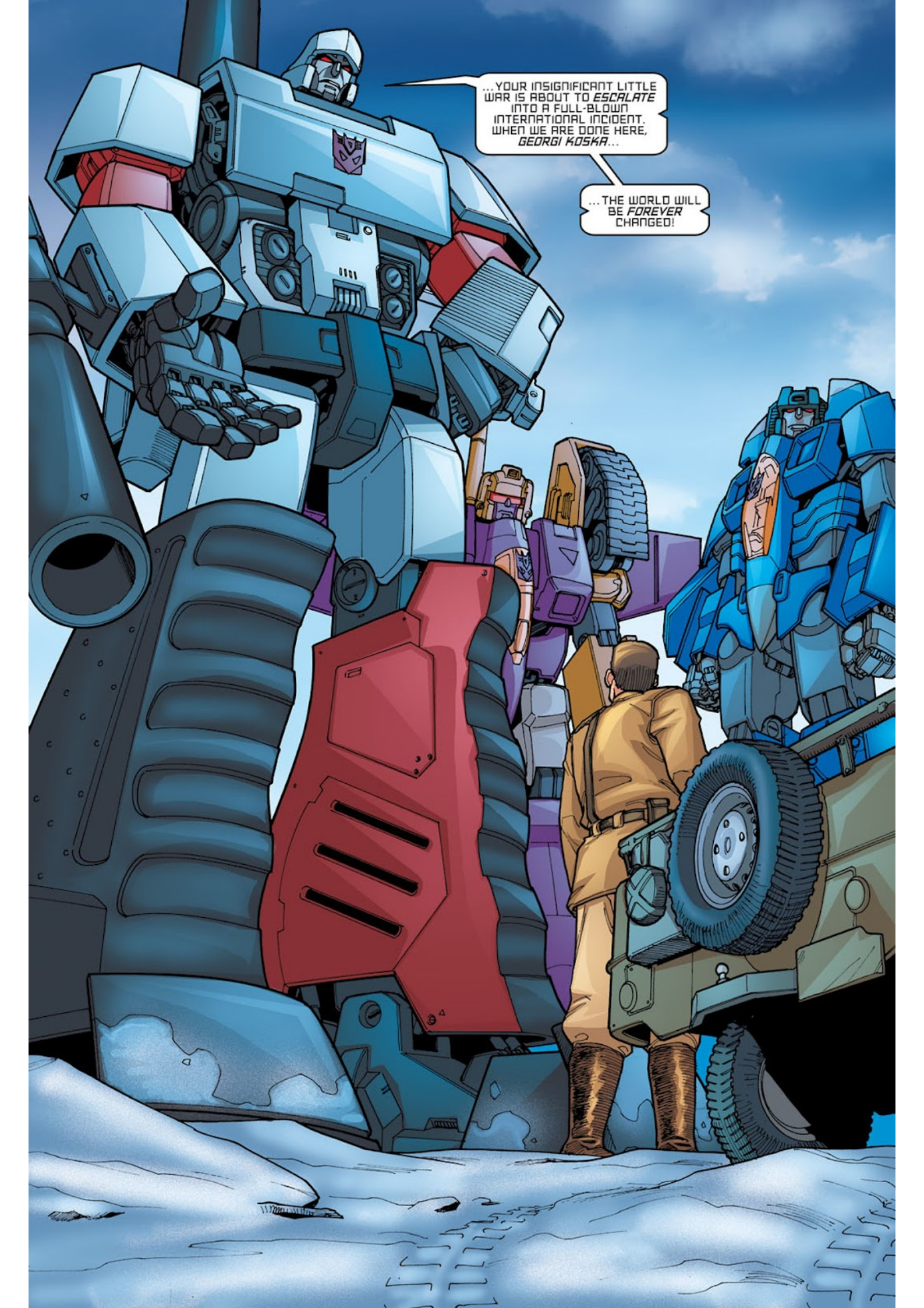
www.IDWPUBLISHING.com

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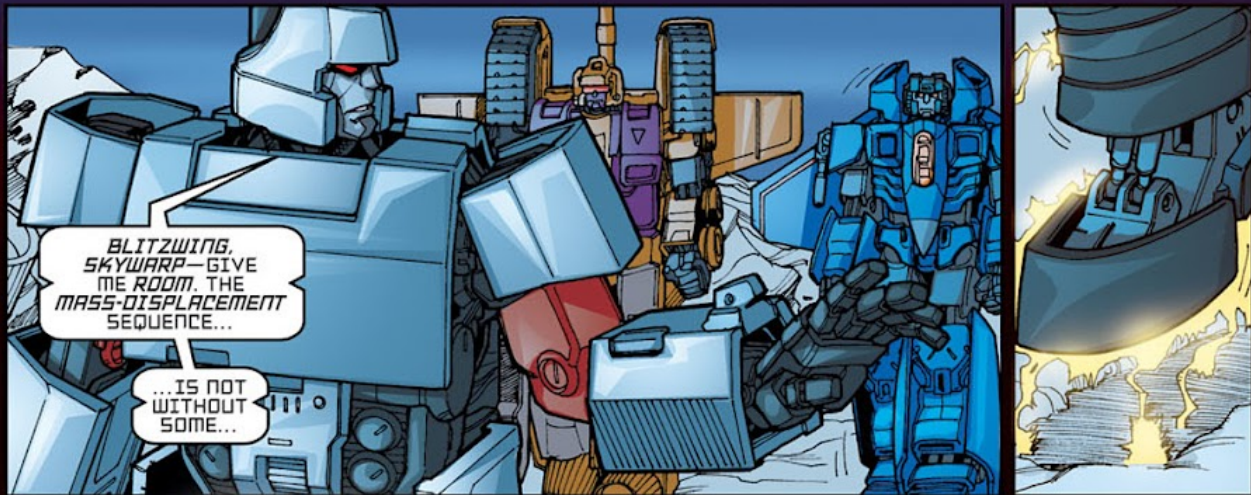
BREAKAWAY SOVIET
STATE OF BRASNYA:





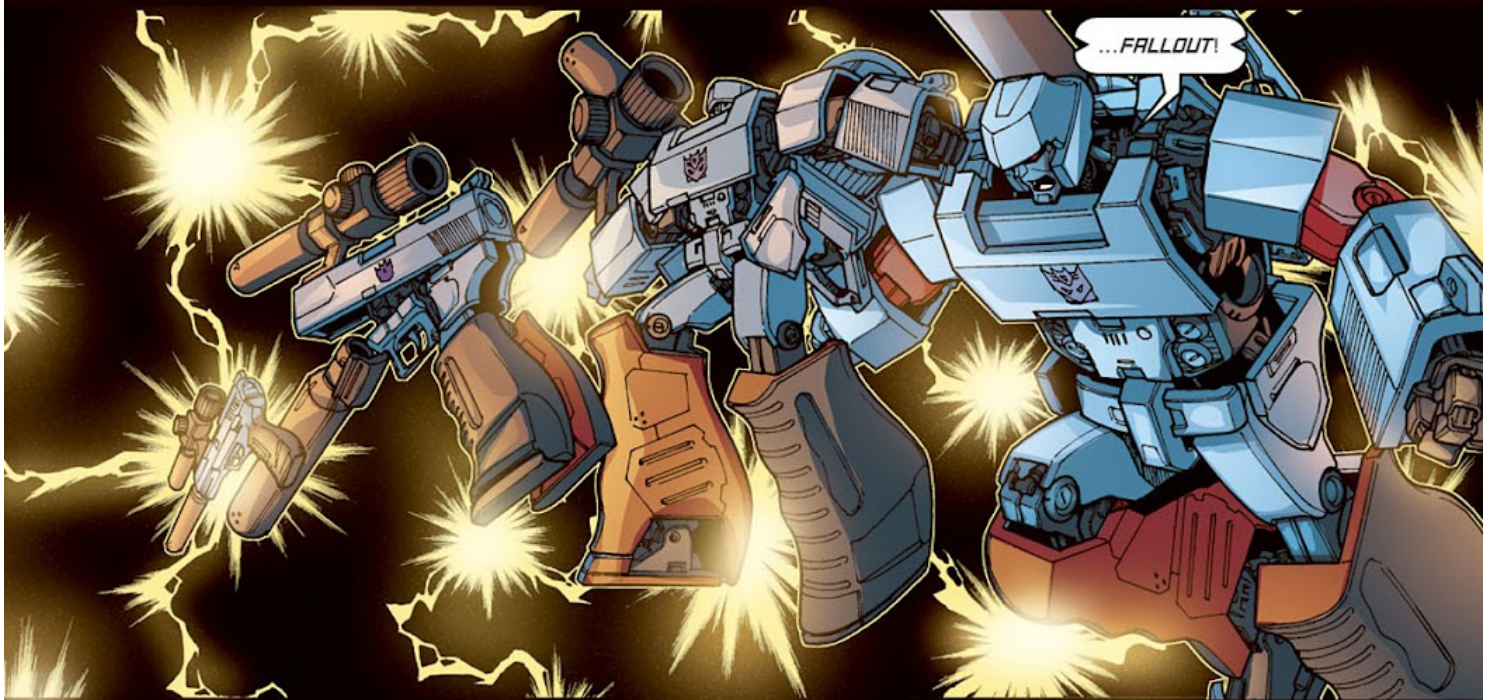
...YOUR INSIGNIFICANT LITTLE
WAR IS ABOUT TO *ESCALATE*
INTO A FULL-BLOWN
INTERNATIONAL INCIDENT.
WHEN WE ARE DONE HERE,
GEORGI KOSKA...

...THE WORLD WILL
BE *FOREVER*
CHANGED!



BLITZWING,
SKYWARP—GIVE
ME ROOM. THE
MASS-DISPLACEMENT
SEQUENCE...

...IS NOT
WITHOUT
SOME...



...FALLOUT!



KOSKA, THOUGH YOU ARE
HUMAN IN APPEARANCE
ALONE, YOU HAVE THE
UNPRECEDENTED HONOR...

...OF WIELDING
THE GALAXY'S
GREATEST
LIVING WEAPON.



YOU KNOW
WHAT TO DO...



THERE. WITH THEIR
PRIMARY OIL SUPPLY
LINE SEVERED, THE
SOVIETS WILL NOT
BE LONG IN
INVESTIGATING.

KOSKA—
GATHER YOUR
REBEL FORCE.



SKYWARP—MAKE
YOURSELF SCARCE.
BLITZWING—



—ENGAGE
CHAMELEON-MESH.

ARK-19 (LAKE MICHIGAN):

REINFORCEMENTS?

I DON'T UNDERSTAND. SURE, THE STAKES ARE HIGHER, THE OPPOSITION A LOT TOUGHER, BUT WITH *YOU* HERE, WE CAN HANDLE THIS.

I DISAGREE.

THIS IS NOT A REFLECTION ON YOUR COMMAND, *PROWL*. EARTH HAS SIMPLY GRADUATED FROM PERIPHERAL TO *PIVOTAL*. ONE FALSE MOVE FROM HEREON IN...

...AND WE MIGHT ALL PAY THE PRICE!

BUT—

IT'S *ALREADY* DONE. WITH MEGATRON ACTIVE ON EARTH AND *SUNSTREAKER* M.I.A., I HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO PULL RESOURCES FROM ELSEWHERE.

I DO *NOT* DO SO LIGHTLY.

OF COURSE. FORGIVE ME.

PRIME—WHILE WE'RE ON THE SUBJECT OF RESOURCE ALLOCATION...



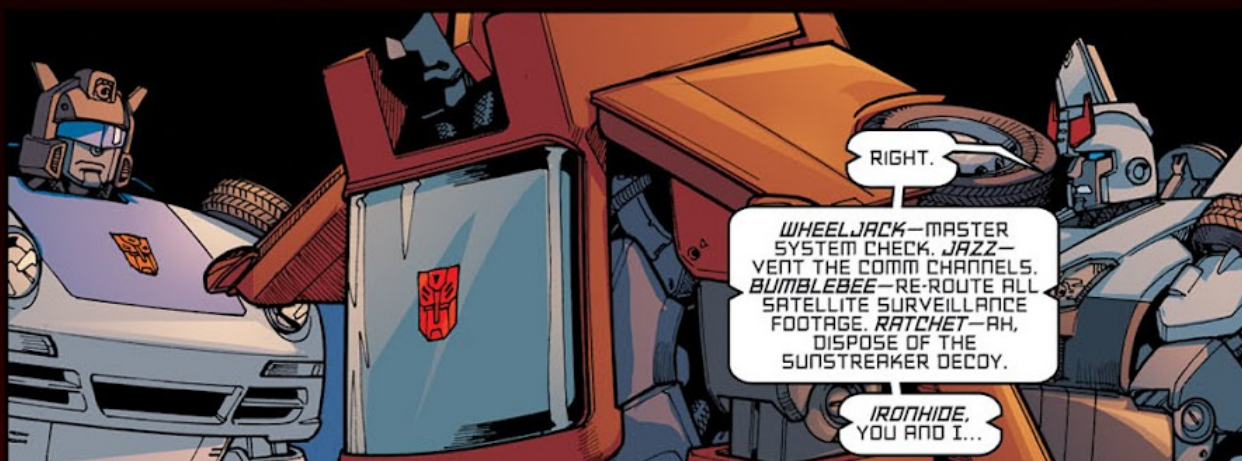
...I THINK I'D BE *BETTER* POSITIONED FOLLOWING UP ON THE ABDUCTION.

WE DON'T KNOW WHO TOOK SUNSTREAKER OR WHY... AND I *DUE* IT TO HIM TO FIND OUT.



NO.

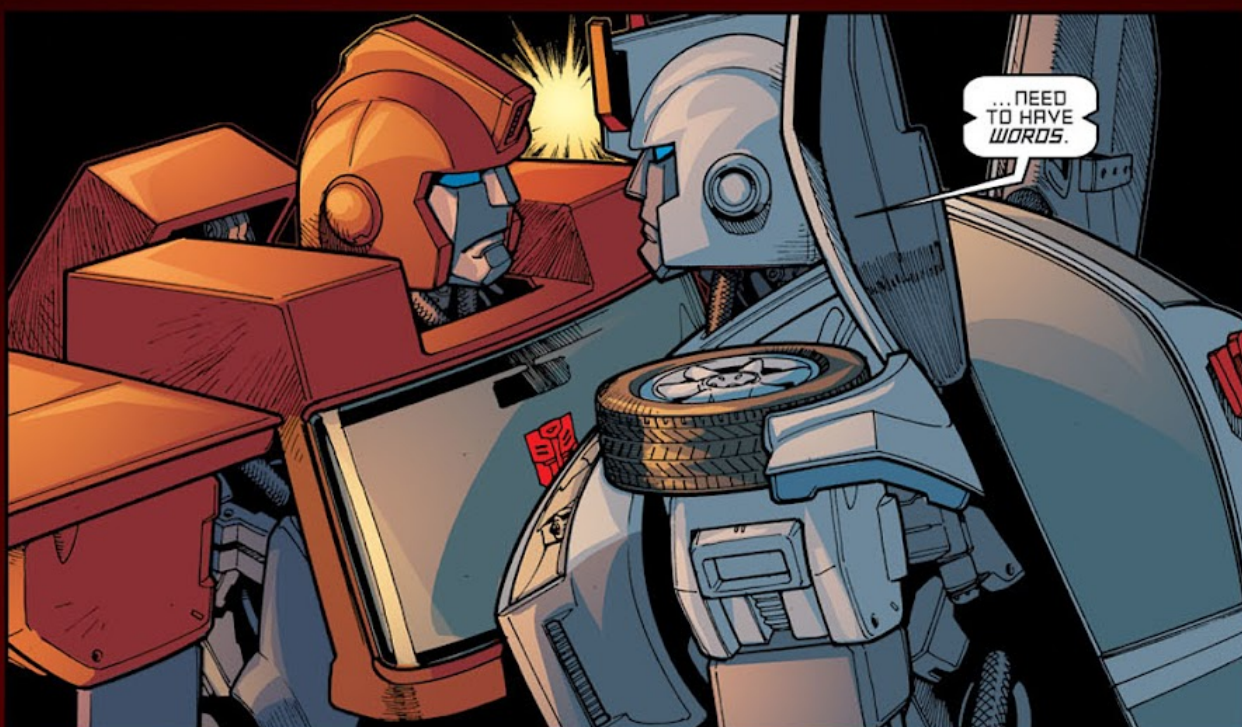
CONTINUE MONITORING FOR SIGNS OF DECEPTICON AGITATION. I WANT THE GEO-POLITICAL WORLDMAP UPDATED AT THREE-CYCLE INTERVALS.



RIGHT.

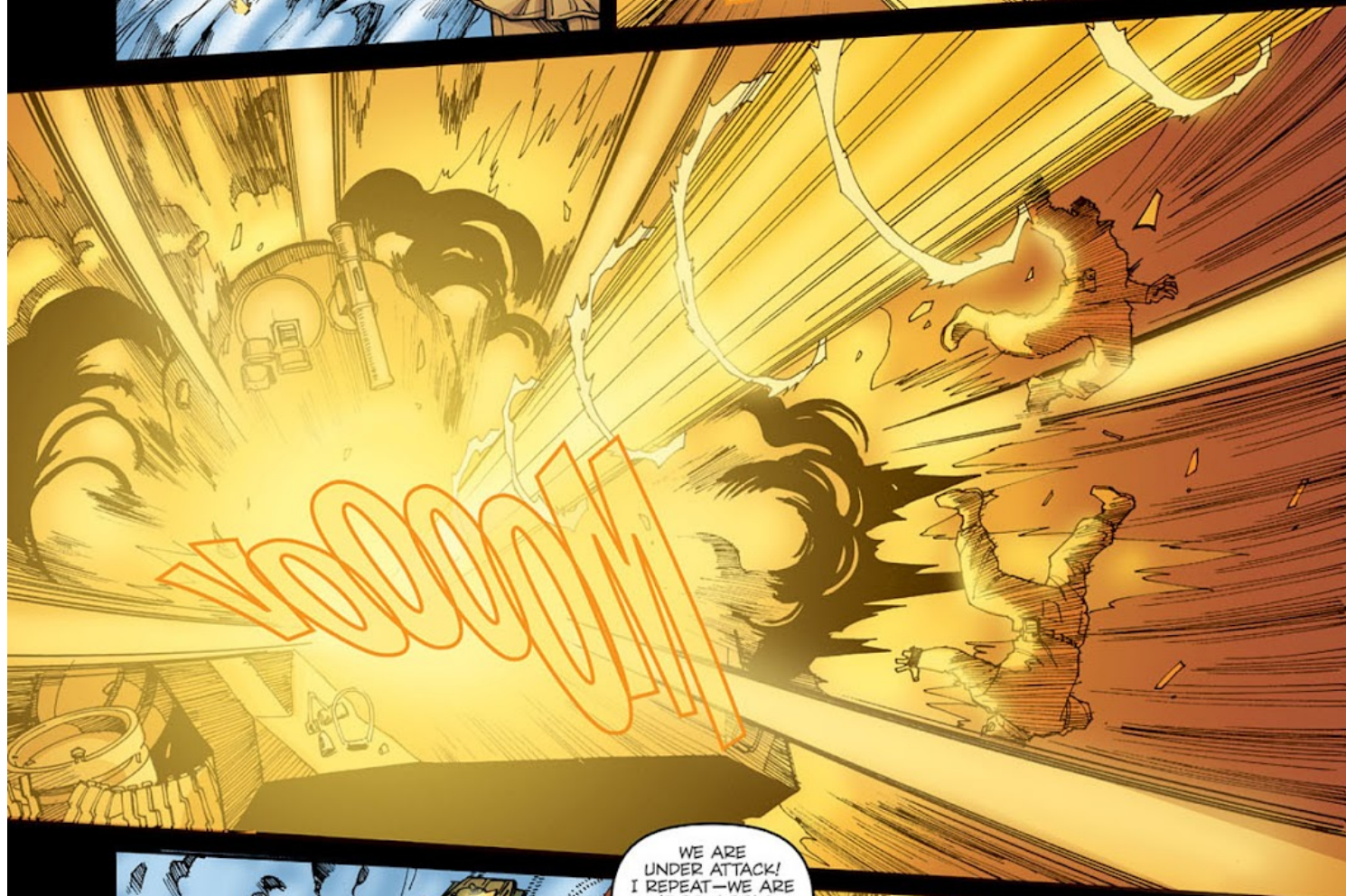
WHEELJACK—MASTER SYSTEM CHECK. *JAZZ*—VENT THE COMM CHANNELS. *BUMBLEBEE*—RE-ROUTE ALL SATELLITE SURVEILLANCE FOOTAGE. *RATCHET*—AH, DISPOSE OF THE SUNSTREAKER DECOY.

IRONHIDE, YOU AND I...



...NEED TO HAVE *WORDS*.









AND... THEY'D HAVE **RECORDS** OF CLIENTS, CUSTOMERS AND SO FORTH.



I'M BETTING YOU'VE GOT ALL **SORTS** OF SUPER-DUPER SOFTWARE ON THIS CRATE, **INVASIVE** PROGRAMS THAT COULD DIP RIGHT IN AND OUT OF OUR "PRIMITIVE" SYSTEMS.



NOW SUPPOSE SOMEONE—**ME**, FOR EXAMPLE—WAS GIVEN UNLIMITED ACCESS TO YOUR MAINFRAME. THERE'S NO TELLING **WHAT** THEY COULD SHAKE LOOSE.



I SHOULD TAKE THIS TO PROWL... **BUT**, LET'S FACE IT, HE'D PROBABLY EITHER DISMISS IT OR SIT ON IT.

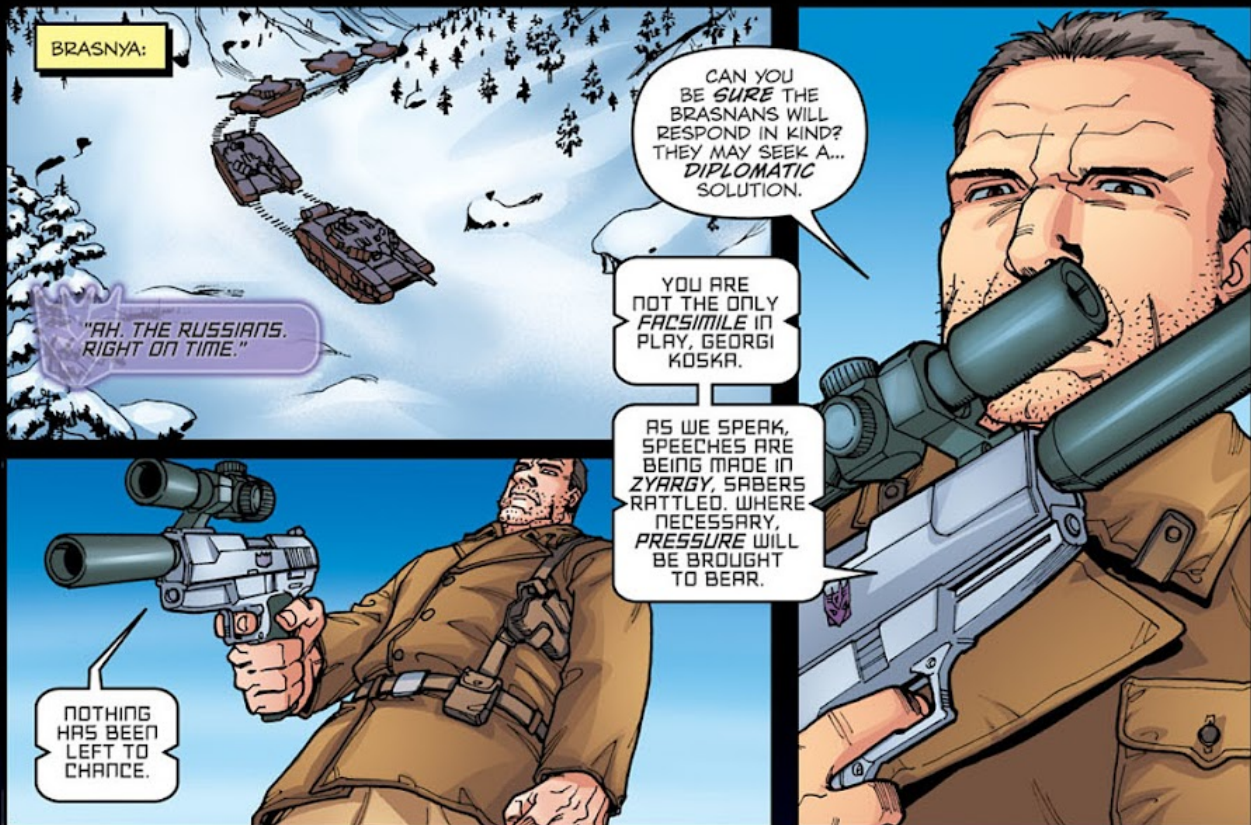
QUESTION IS, AFTER MY RECENT CLUTCH OF INDISCRETIONS, DO I **REALLY** WANT TO STICK MY NECK OUT AGAIN?

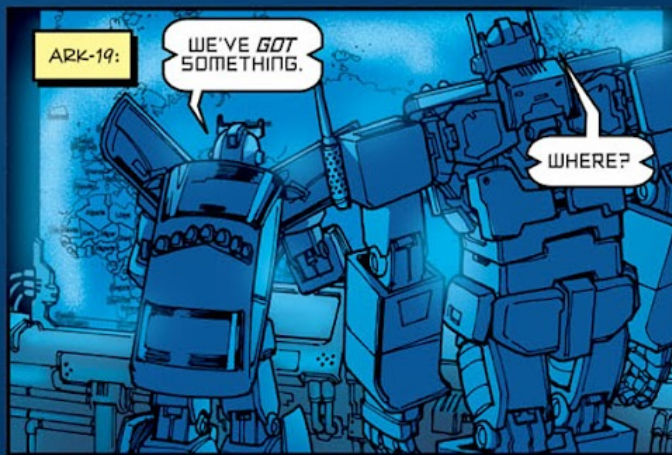
HM.



I GUESS SO...

dft





ARK-19:

WE'VE GOT SOMETHING.

WHERE?

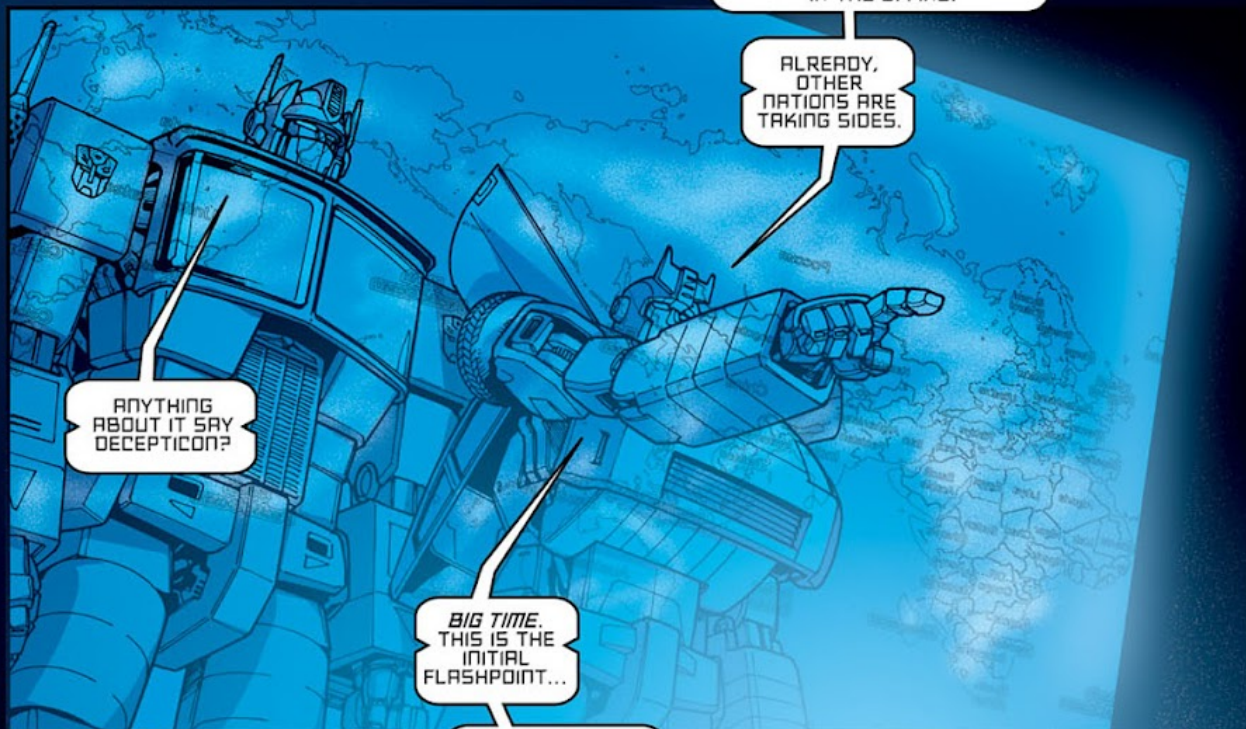


HERE.



7:11PM ET CNN Headline News
ARAB CONFLICT: 700 PLUS DEAD
ECONOMY \$20 OFFSHORE

RUSSIAN TANKS, WHERE THEY SHOULDN'T BE. THE GENERAL CONSENSUS IS, THERE'S A *CRISIS* BREWING, AN ARMED CONFRONTATION IN THE OFFING.



ANYTHING ABOUT IT SAY DECEPTICON?

ALREADY, OTHER NATIONS ARE TAKING SIDES.

BIG TIME. THIS IS THE INITIAL FLASHPOINT...



IT'S FROM OUR OWN SATELLITE SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM. HERE, LET ME SHOW YOU WITH A *RESONANCE OVERLAY*...

THERE, RECOGNIZE THOSE DISCHARGES?



MEGATRON.



WE ISOLATED *THIS* IMAGE. ACCORDING TO THE INTERNET, HIS NAME IS GEORGI KOSKA, HEAD OF A MILITARISTIC SPLINTER FACTION. WE FIGURE HIM FOR THE *FACSIMILE*.

AND, CRAZY AS IT SOUNDS...



...WE THINK *THIS* IS MEGATRON.



MASS-DISPLACEMENT. HAVEN'T SEEN THAT IN A *LONG* TIME. THE ENERGY EXPENDITURE MUST BE COLOSSAL.

ORE-13?

WITHOUT A DOUBT. ACTION?



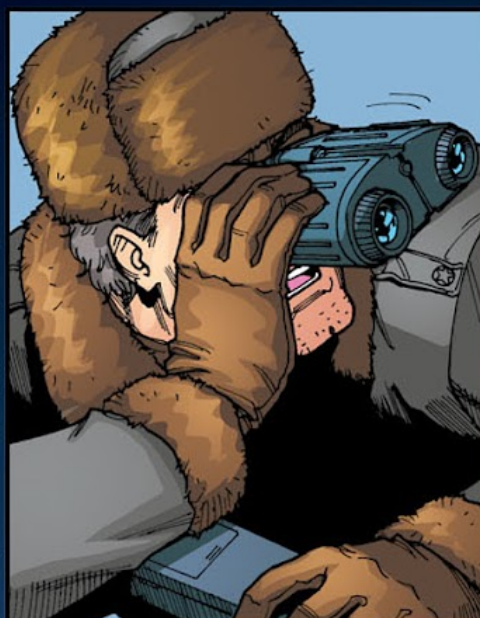
STAMP OUT THE FLAMES. KEEP MEGATRON'S ATTENTION ON US AND PRESERVE/CONTAIN THE FACSIMILE... AT *ANY* COST!

AGREED.



READY YOUR STRIKE TEAM.







THAT'S
CONFIRMED. I
REPEAT—WE HAVE
SOVIET ARMOR
FIRING ON OUR
POSITION.

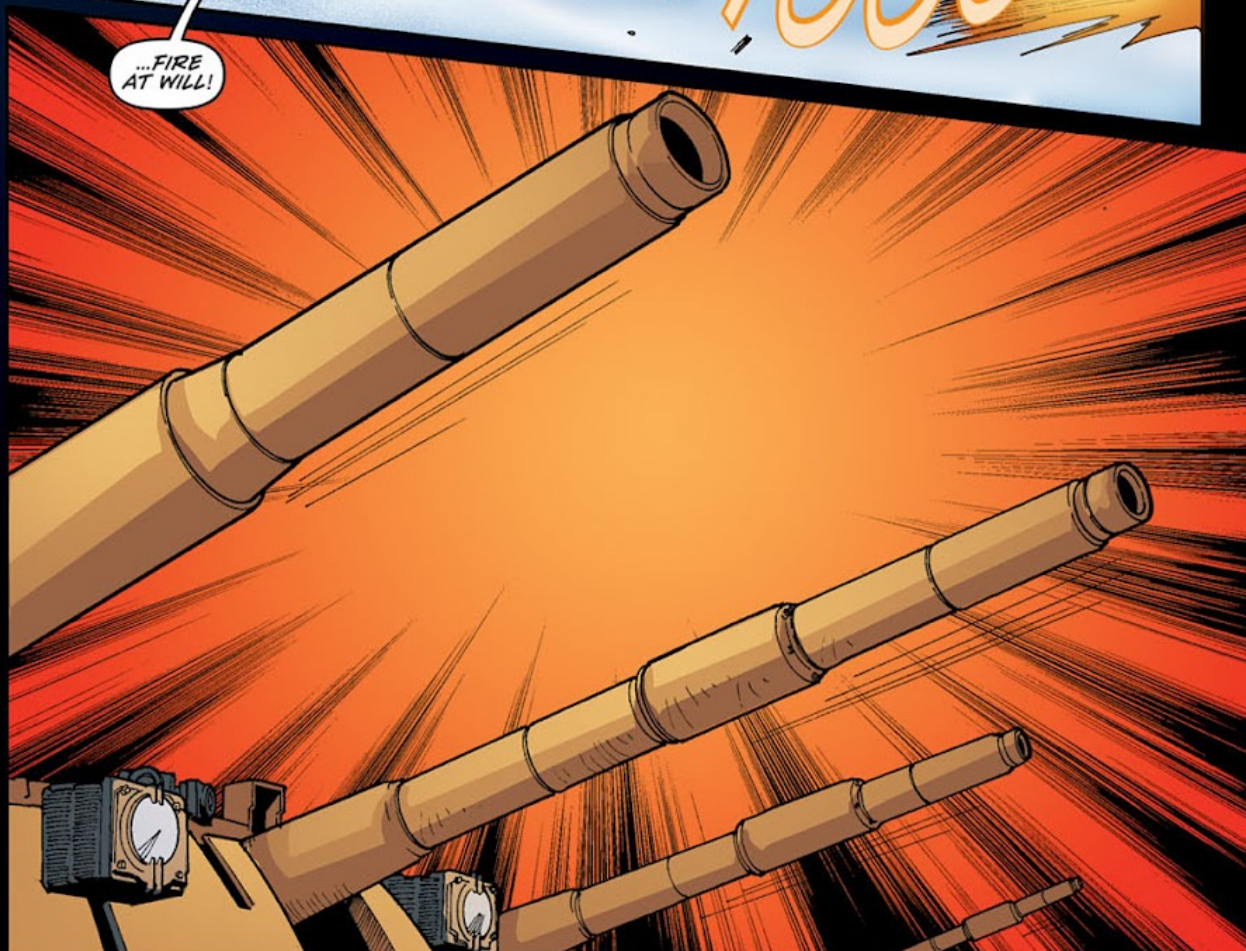


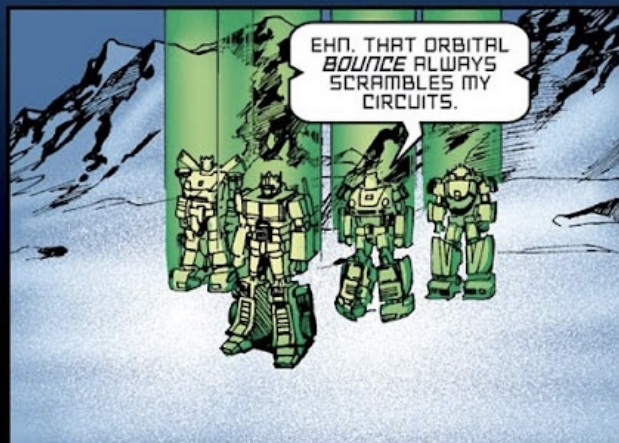
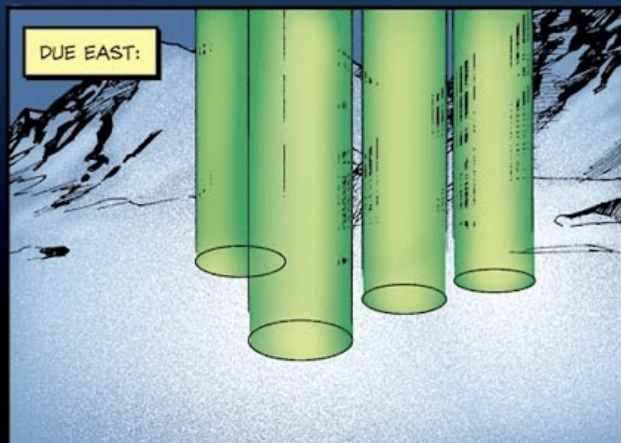
SIR, I NEED A
DIRECT ORDER
HERE!

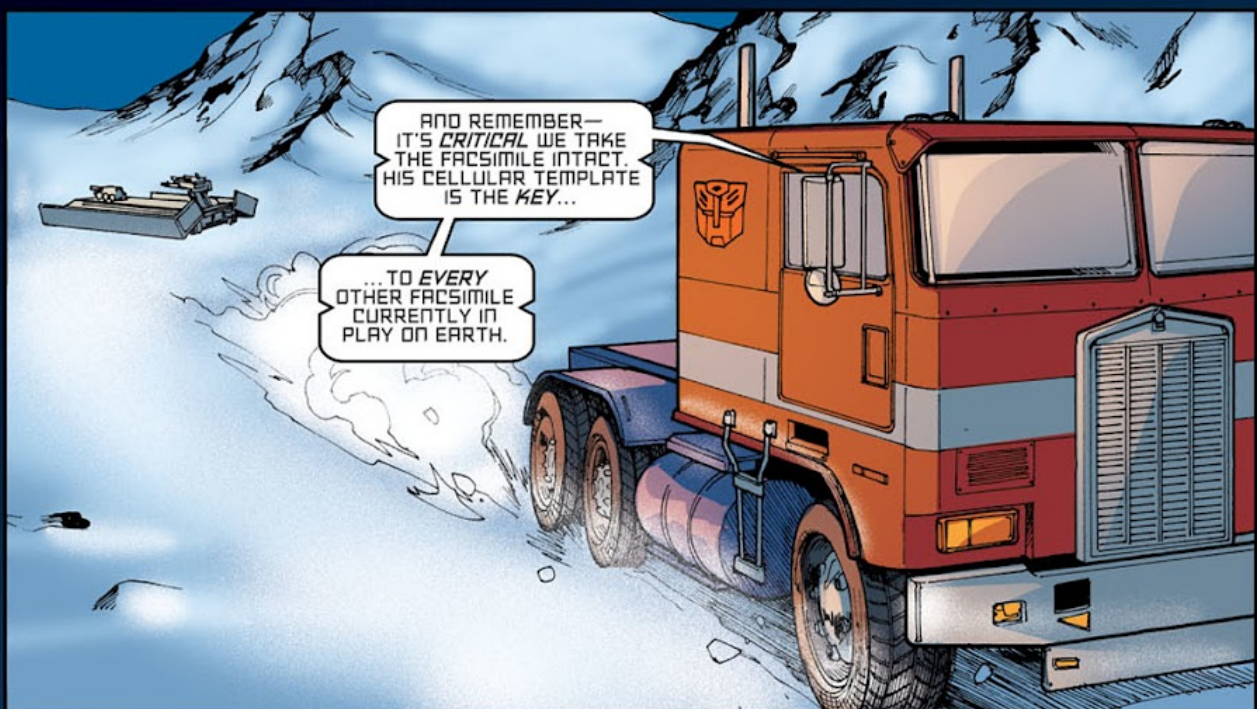
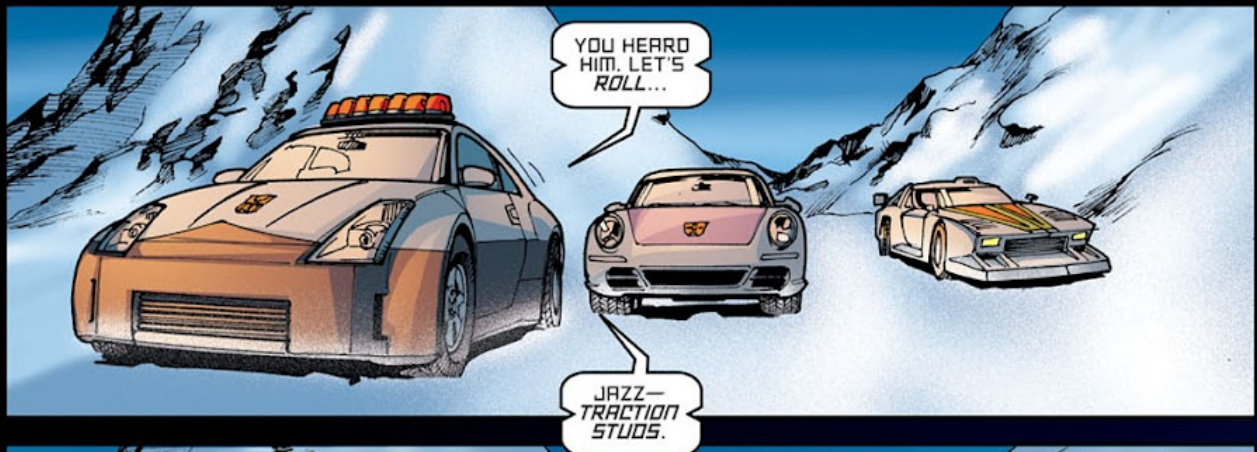
UNDERSTOOD.
ALL UNITS...

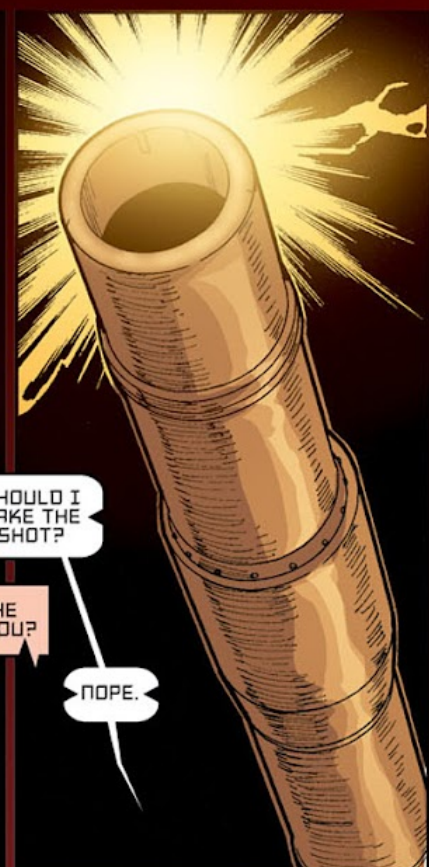
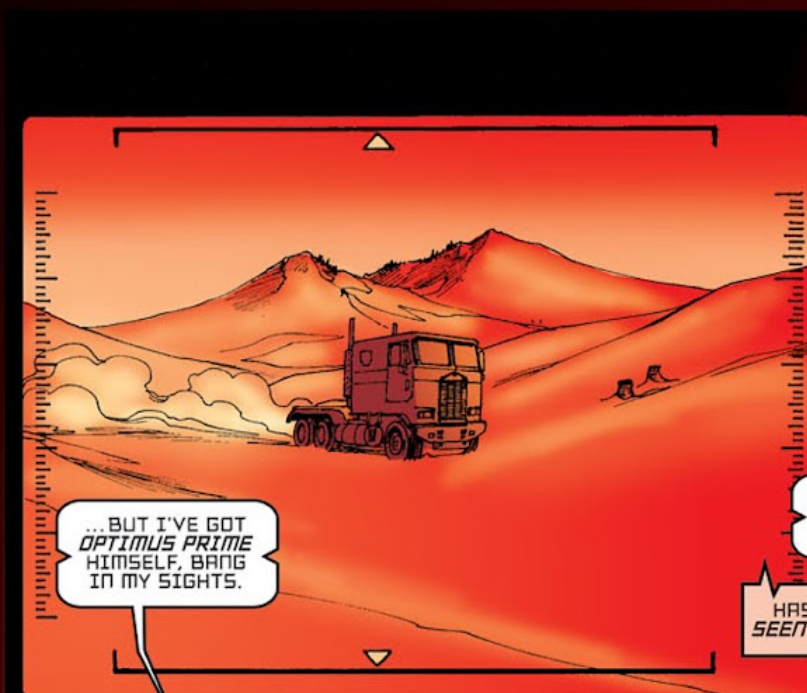
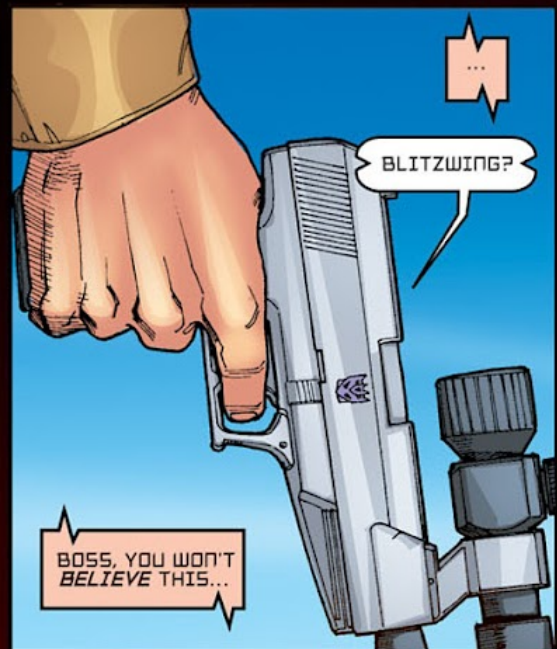
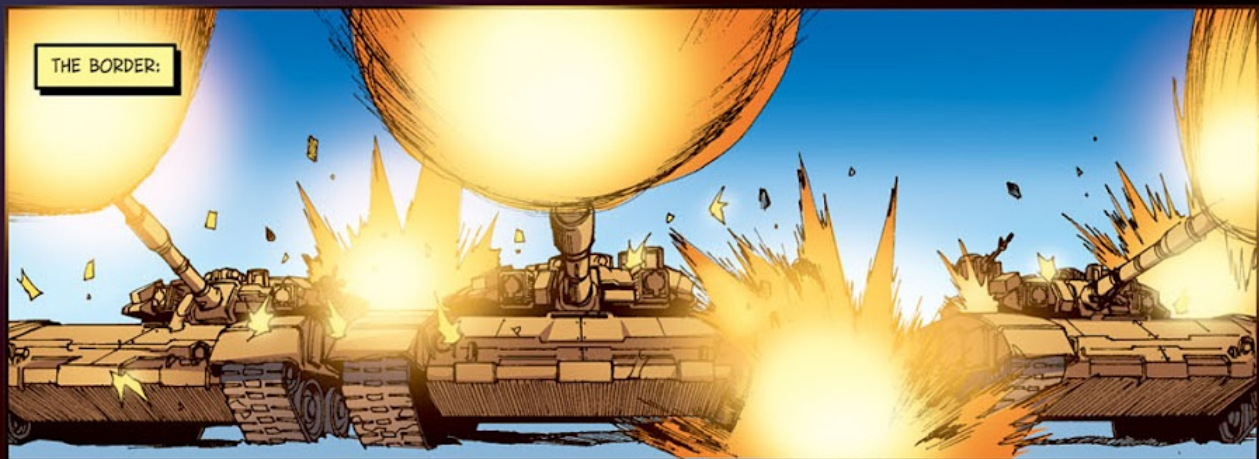
...FIRE
AT WILL!

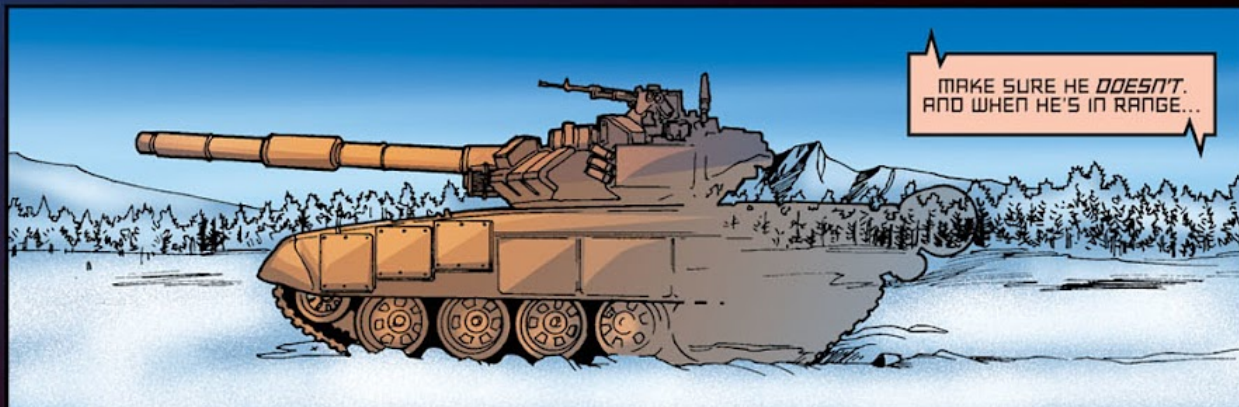
KT-
TOOOM!











ARK-32:



UNDERSTOOD.
NIGHTBEAT OUT.



LOOKS LIKE WE
TURNED UP IN THE
MIDDLE OF SOMETHING,
HOT ROD. PRIME AND
MOST OF THE TACTICAL
UNIT ARE IN THE FIELD.
SEEMS MEGATRON'S
MAKING HIS MOVE.

WE'RE TO SIT
TIGHT UNTIL
WE GET OUR
BEARINGS AND
THEN—

HEY, NIGHTBEAT,
YOU CAN SIT TIGHT
IF YOU WANT. ME
AND *HARDHEAD*...



...WE'RE
GOING IN!

HOO-
HAH!

ARK-19:

UH-UH.
THOSE ARE BULK-
MANUFACTURE, FOR
THE EXPORT MARKET.
HOW ABOUT THIS
ONE?

ULTRALITE
AMERICA. YEAH,
COULD BE.

CAN YOU SORT
THE ORDERS BY
SIZE AND DATE? IT
WOULD HAVE BEEN
RECENT...

...AND CHANCES
ARE THEY *ONLY*
TOOK WHAT THEY
NEEDED.

UH... *THERE*.
THOSE TWO. A
GARAGE IN BEAVER,
UTAH... AND... A
CUSTOM CAR OUTLET
IN FORT WAYNE,
INDIANA.

YOU KNOW
WHAT THIS MEANS,
DON'T YOU?

ROAD
TRIP!

I HOPE
YOU WEREN'T
THINKING OF
GOING
ANYWHERE?

...WITHOUT
ME!

TO BE CONTINUED...



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ESCALATION



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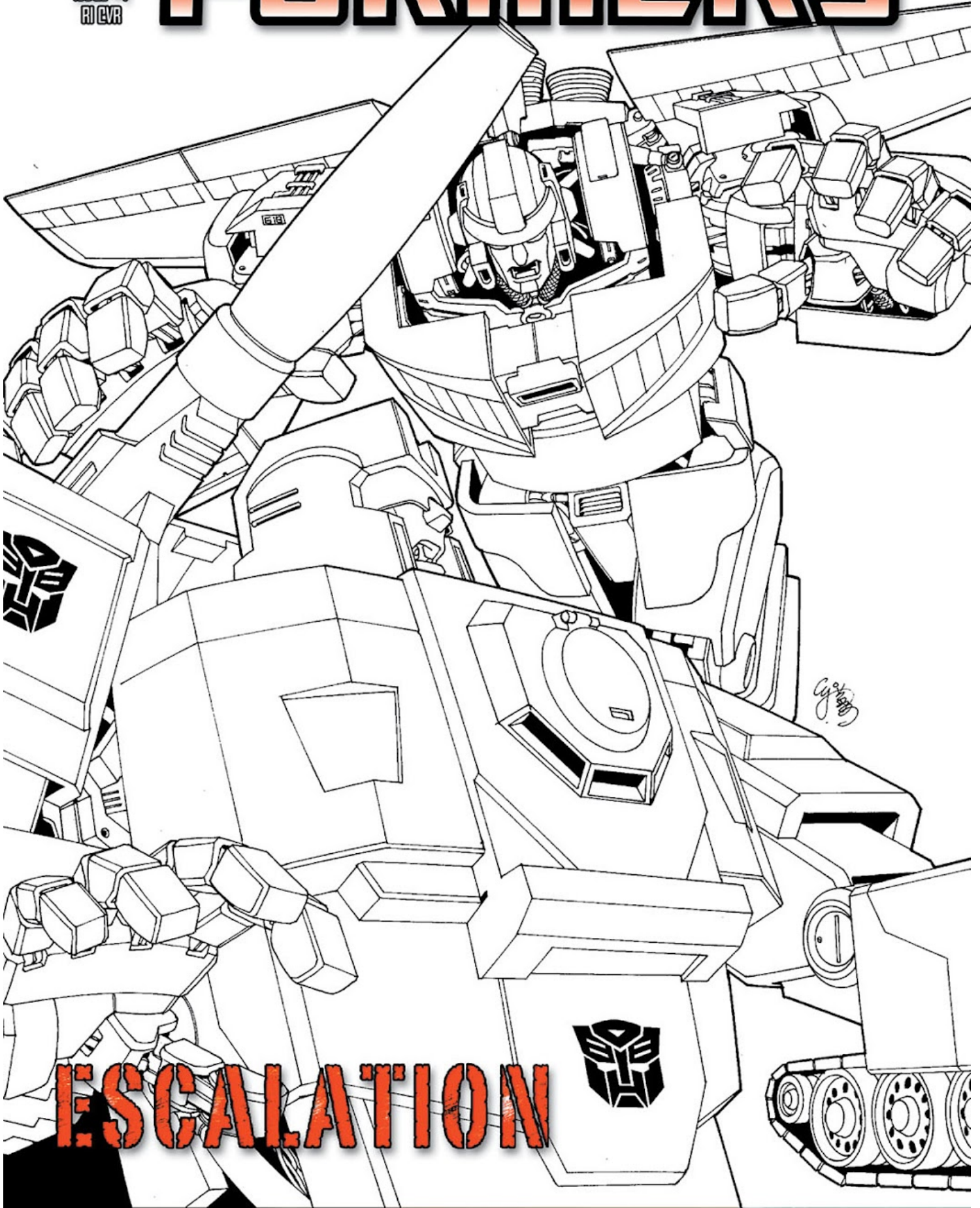


ESCALATION



ISSUE #4
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THE TRANSFORMERS™



ESCALATION



THE TRANSFORMERS ESCALATION

WRITTEN BY : **SIMON FURMAN**

ART BY : **E.J. SU**

COLORS BY : **ZAC ATKINSON**

LETTERS BY : **NEIL UYETAKE**

EDITS BY : **CHRIS RYALL & DAN TAYLOR**

COVER BY : **E.J. SU**

VARIANT COVER BY : **KLAUS SCHERWINSKI**



ISSUE NUMBER FOUR

ESCALATION:

When an incendiary conflict flares on a disputed stretch of border between Russia and the breakaway state of Brasnya, OPTIMUS PRIME leads an Autobot assault team into the area in an effort to frustrate MEGATRON's efforts to agitate the tense standoff and capture the artificial human (facsimile) GEORGI KOSKA. And back in the USA, IRONHIDE, RATCHET, VERITY CARLO and JIMMY PINK seek to shed light on the mysterious abduction of SUNSTREAKER and HUNTER O'NION...

PHASE TWO CONTINUES...



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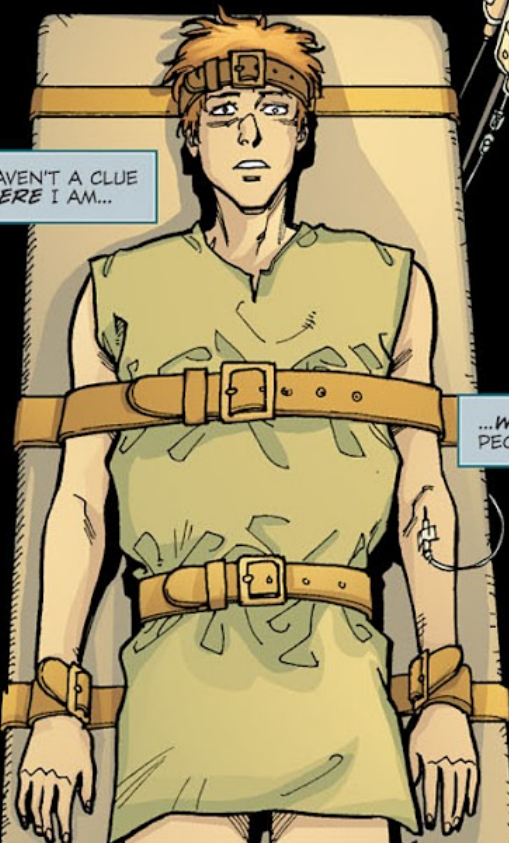
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I HAVEN'T A CLUE
WHERE I AM...



...WHO THESE
PEOPLE ARE...



...OR WHAT HAPPENED TO ME.



ONE MOMENT I WAS RIDING IN
SUNSTREAKER, THE NEXT...
HERE. WAS THERE AN *ACCIDENT*?
WAS I *INJURED*? AND WHY...


...CAN'T I *SPEAK*?

WHAT HAVE THEY DONE
TO ME? WHAT ARE THEY
GOING TO *DO* WITH ME?

RIGHT...



...PREP
HIM FOR
SURGERY.



OHHH, GOD...

FORT WAYNE,
INDIANA:

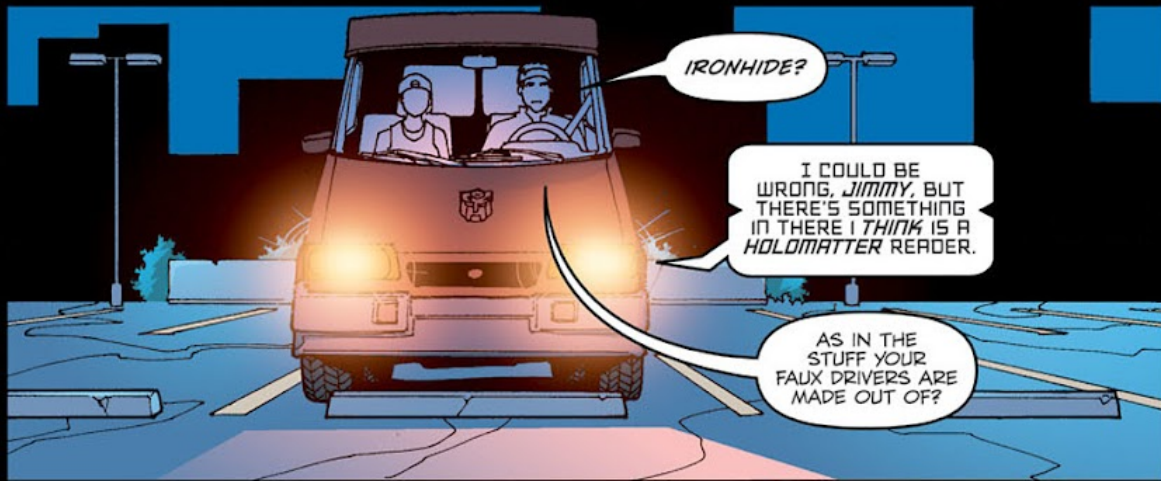
IDEA & DESIGN WORKS CUSTOM WHEELS

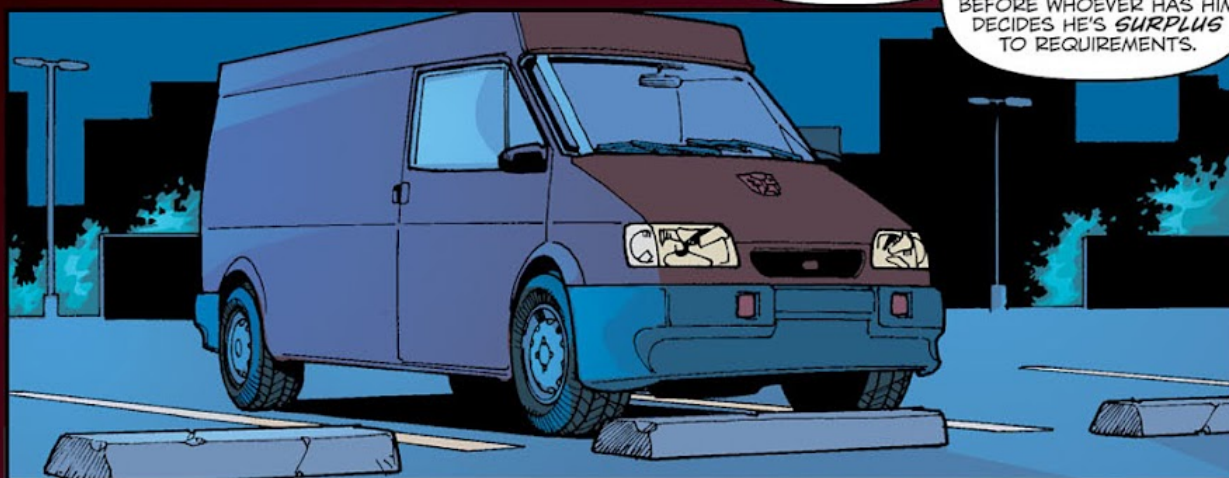
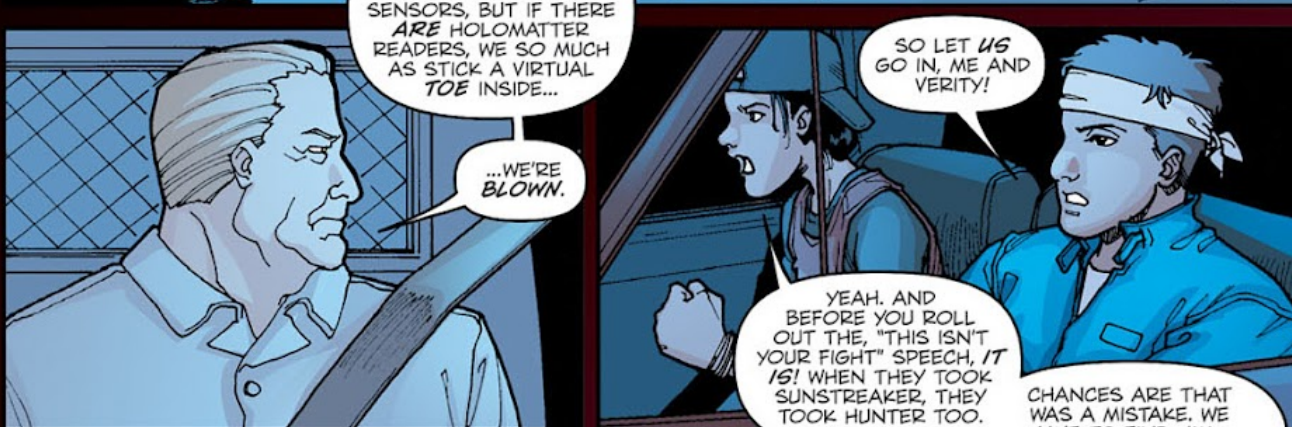
I KNOW THE
CRIME RATE
HEREABOUTS
HAS GONE
SKY-HIGH...

...BUT ISN'T
THIS ON THE
EXTREME
SIDE?

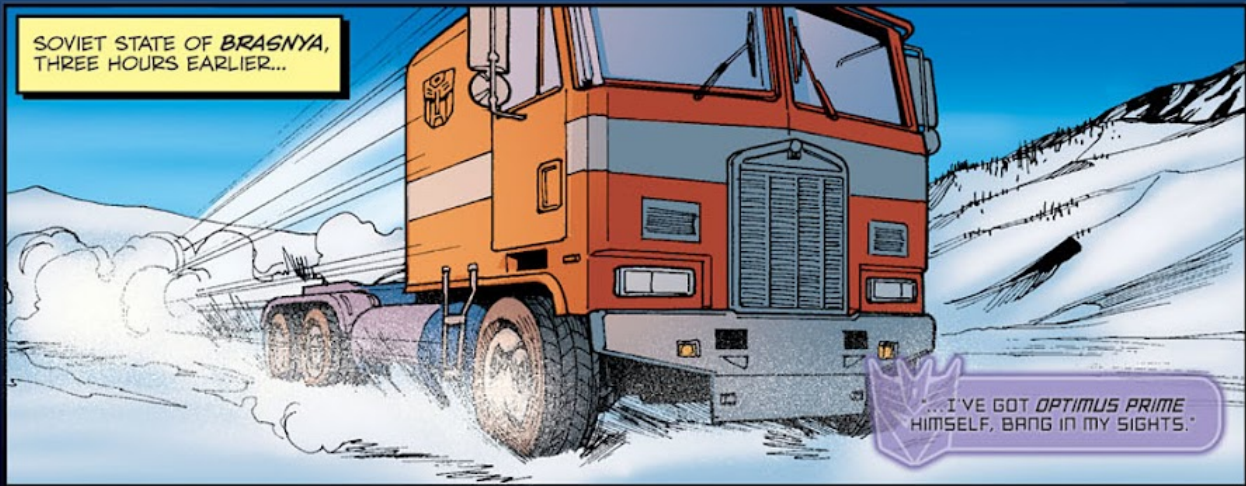
RIIIGHT.
THAT'S A LOT OF
SECURITY FOR A
FEW WHEELTRIMS
AND SOME DODGY
IN-CAR AUDIO.

AND IT'S
SOPHISTICATED
STUFF. MAYBE **700**
SOPHISTICATED.





SOVIET STATE OF BRASNYA,
THREE HOURS EARLIER...



...I'VE GOT *OPTIMUS PRIME*
HIMSELF, BANG IN MY SIGHTS.

SHOULD I
TAKE THE
SHOT?

HAS HE
SEEN YOU?

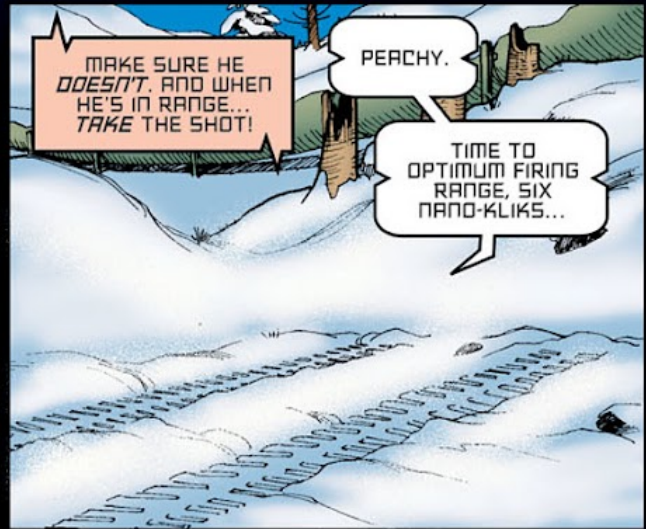
NOPE.



MAKE SURE HE
DOESN'T. AND WHEN
HE'S IN RANGE...
TAKE THE SHOT!

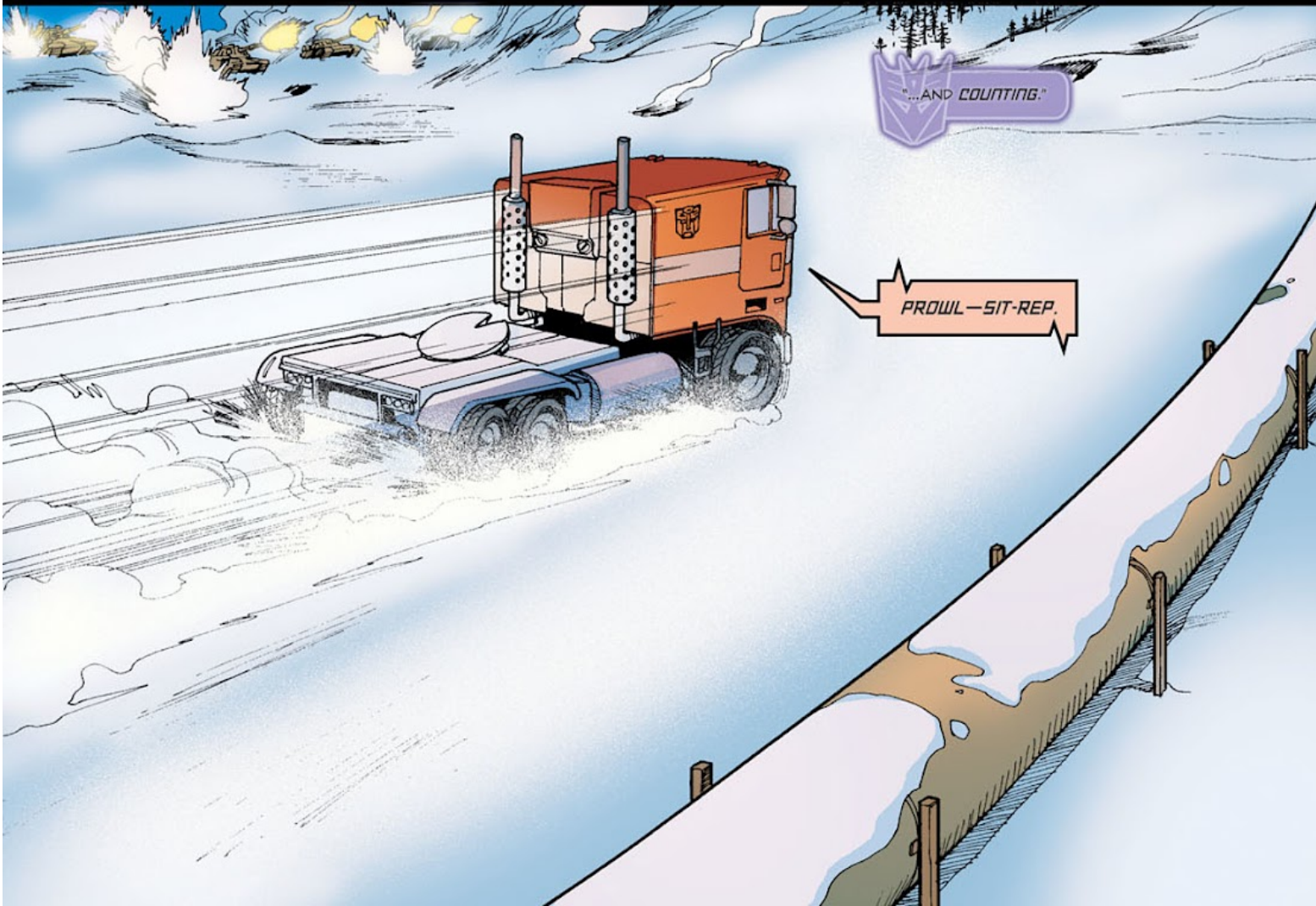
PEACHY.

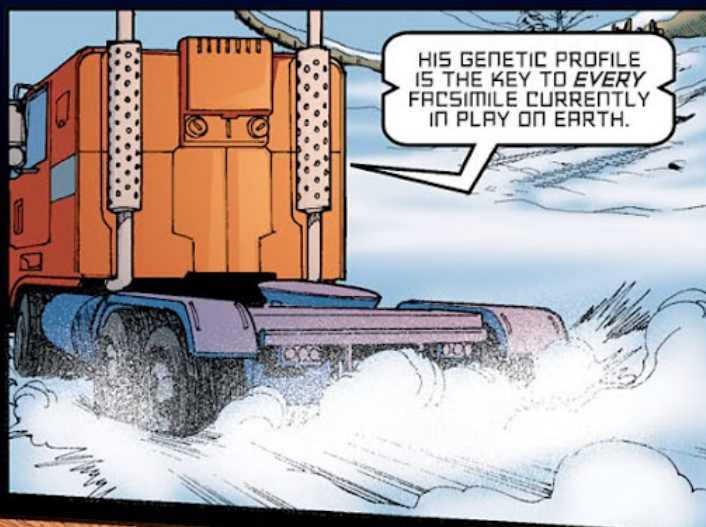
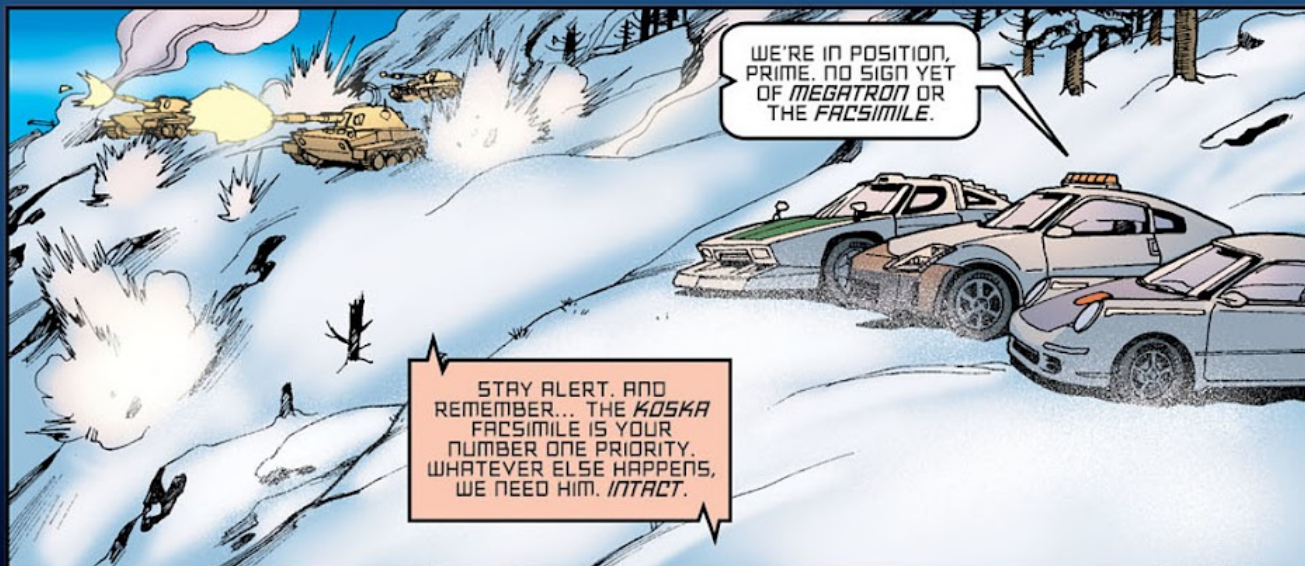
TIME TO
OPTIMUM FIRING
RANGE, SIX
NANO-KLIKES...

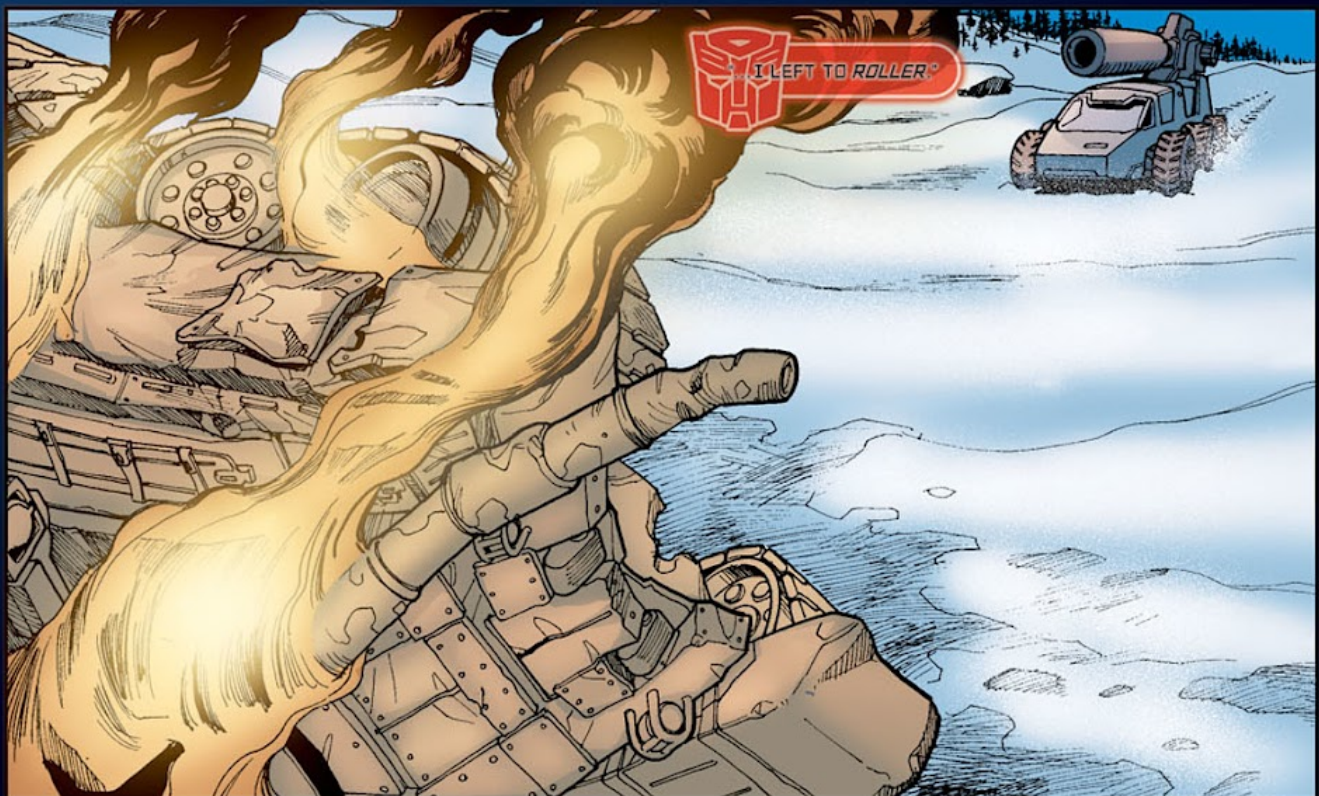
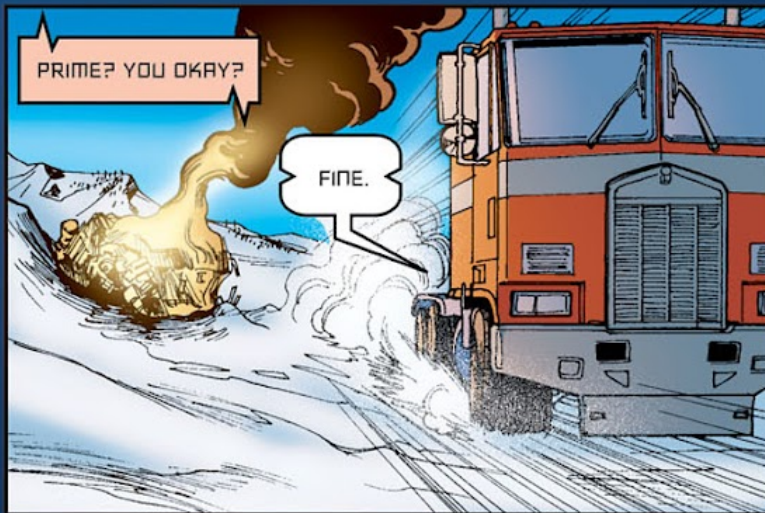


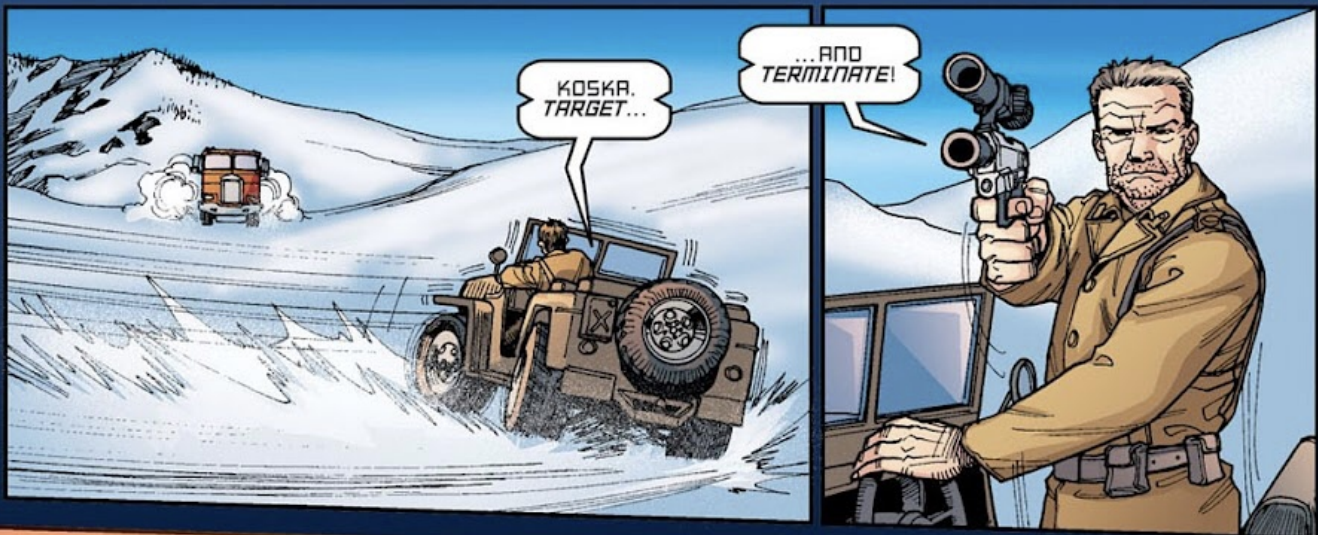
...AND COUNTING.

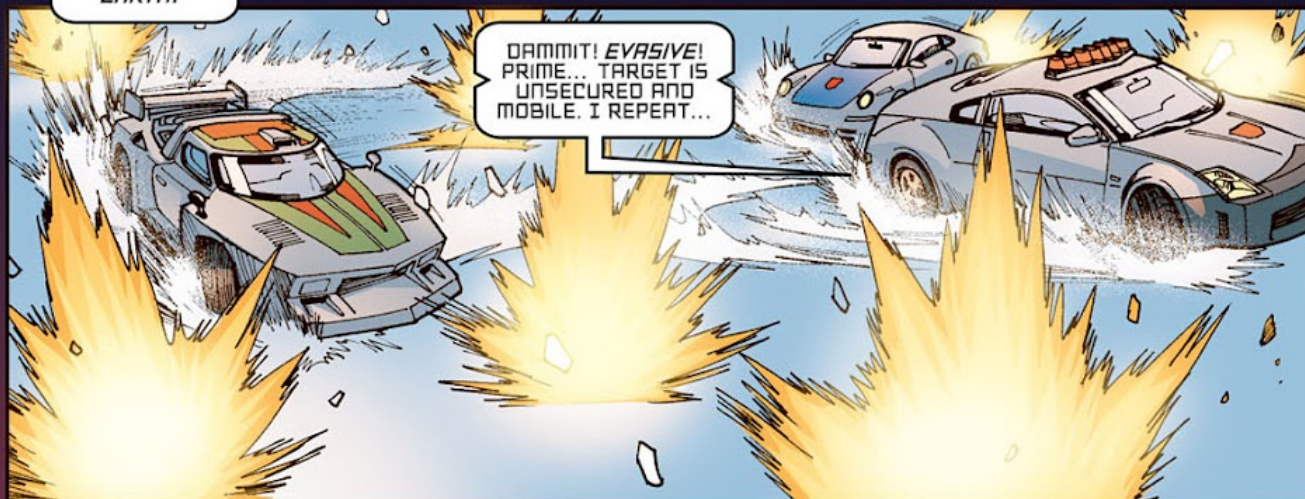
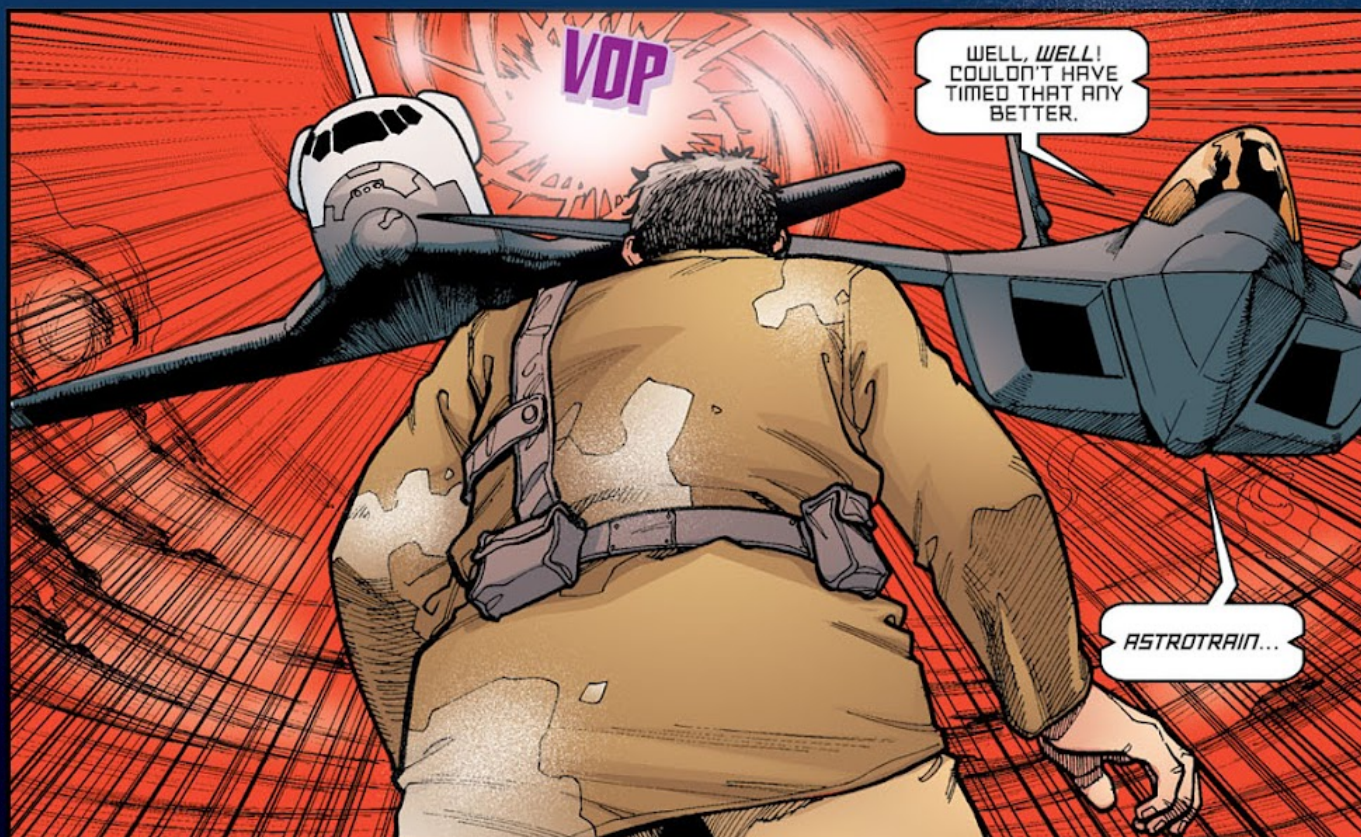
PROWL—SIT-REP.













YOU *GET*
ALL THAT?

UH-HUH. ONE
FACSIMILE.
TAG AND BAG.

WE SHOULD
PROBABLY REPORT
IN FIRST, *HOT ROD*.
LET THEM KNOW
WE'RE IN PLAY.

NO TIME. AND
ANYWAY, LOOKS
LIKE THEY'VE
GOT THEIR
HANDS FULL.



YOU HELP OUT
THE GRUNTS,
HARDHEAD...

...I'M GOING
AFTER THE
GENETIC
PAYLOAD!



FORT WAYNE:



GOT 'EM. SO FAR, SO GOOD... SEEMS CUSTOM WHEELS' CONVENTIONAL SECURITY SYSTEMS ARE SUSCEPTIBLE TO OUR DISCORDANCY FIELD.

GOOD. LET'S JUST HOPE...



WHAT EXACTLY ARE WE LOOKING FOR?

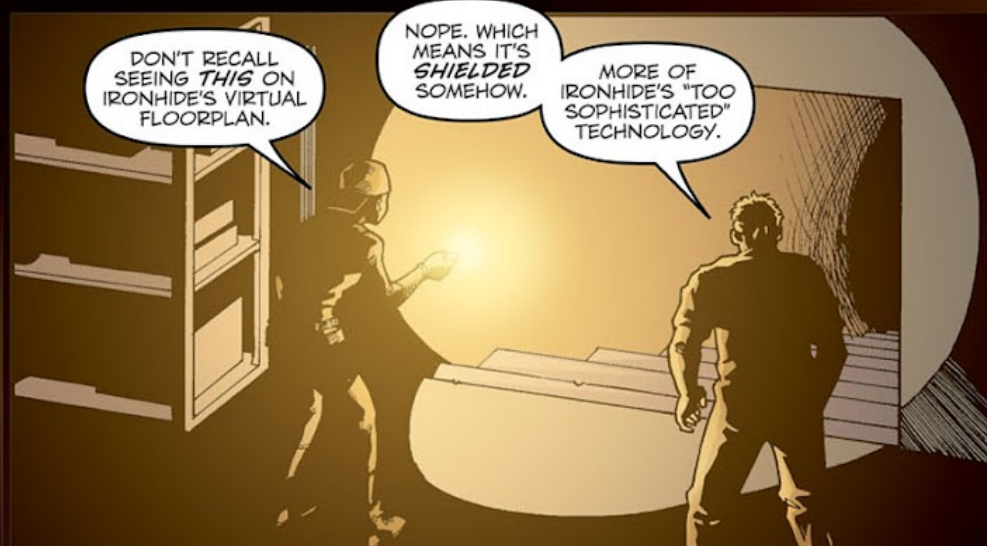
PALLETS OF ULTRALITE-50.

COULD BE, THAT CONSIGNMENT OF ALLOY WE TRACKED WAS DELIVERED AND SHIPPED ONWARDS. BUT IF NOT, WHERE DID IT GO?

"PST! JIMMY!"

THIS LOOKS LIKE A PRETTY STANDARD RETAIL OUTLET AND ULTRALITE'S NOT SOMETHING YOU SELL OVER THE COUNTER. SO, EITHER IT'S HERE, IN SHEET FORM, OR IT WAS USED... MAYBE TO BUILD A SUNSTREAKER DECOY!





BRASNYA:

CEASE
FIRE!

WHAT IS IT?
CAPTAIN
TODOROV?

THE RUSSIANS
HAVE STOPPED
THEIR SHELLING
AND... I SEE
WHY.

WE ARE NO
LONGER THE
ONLY COMBATANTS
IN THE AREA.

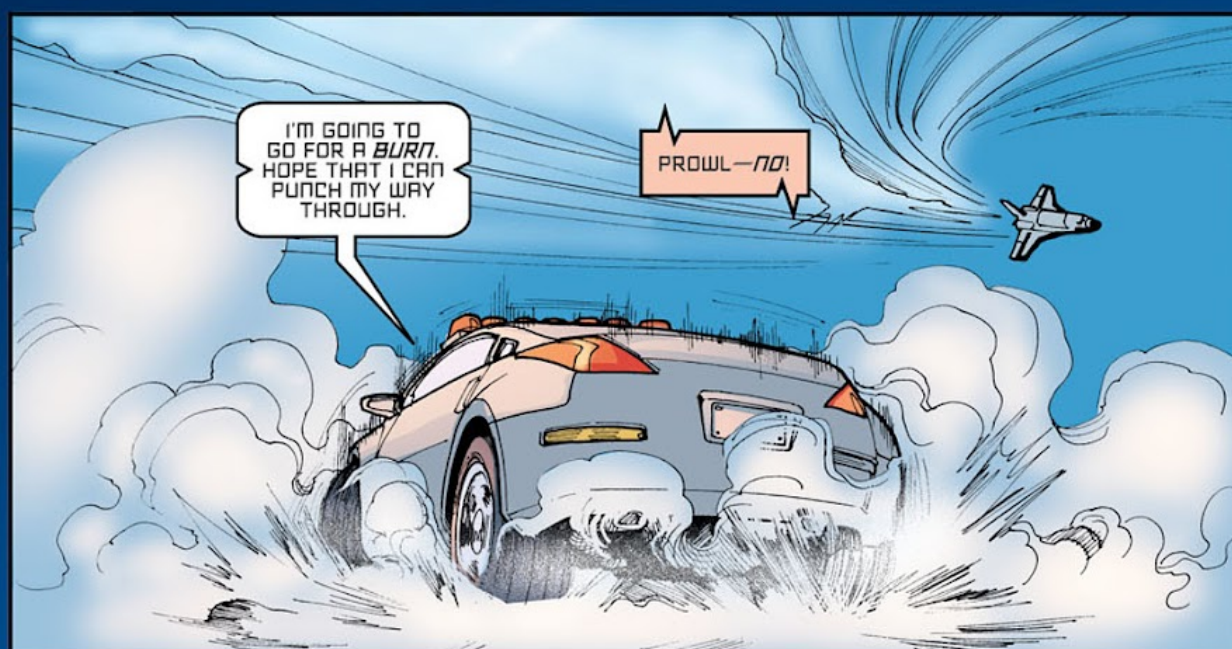
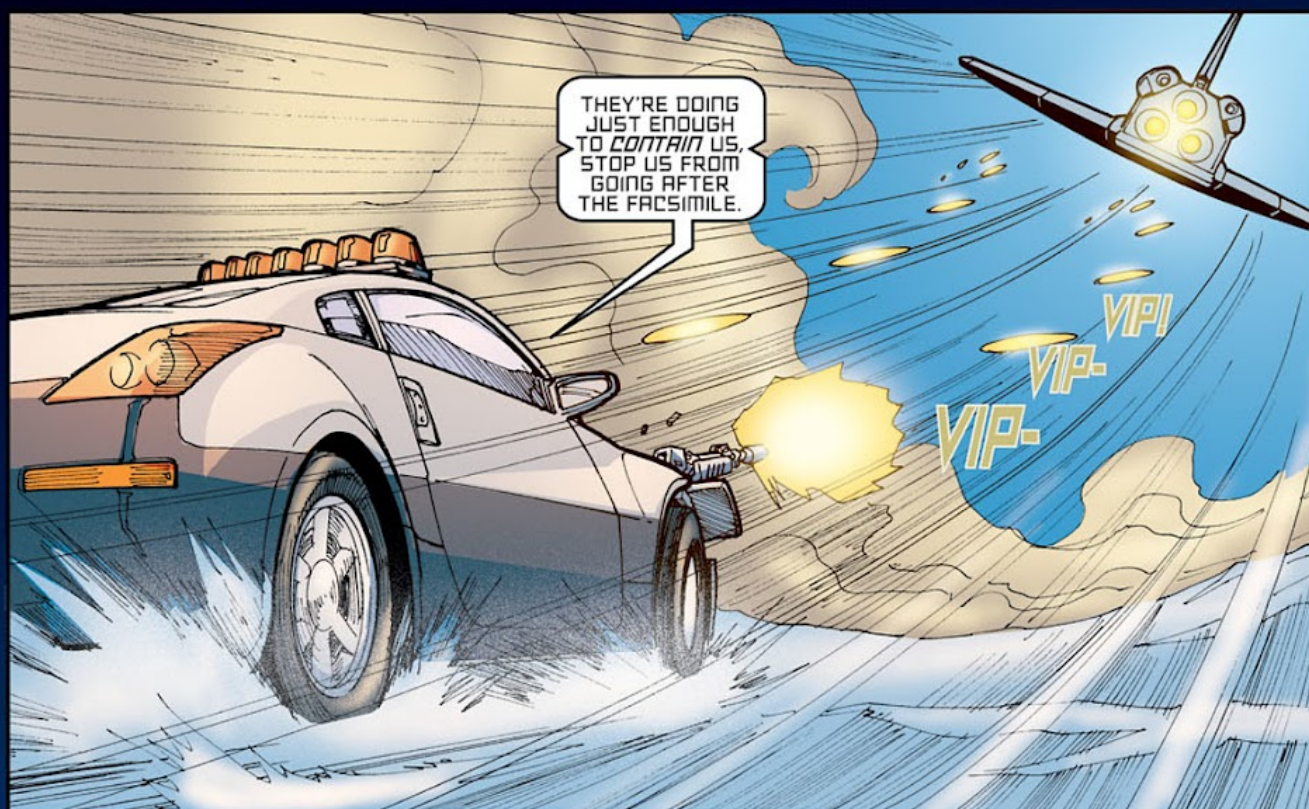
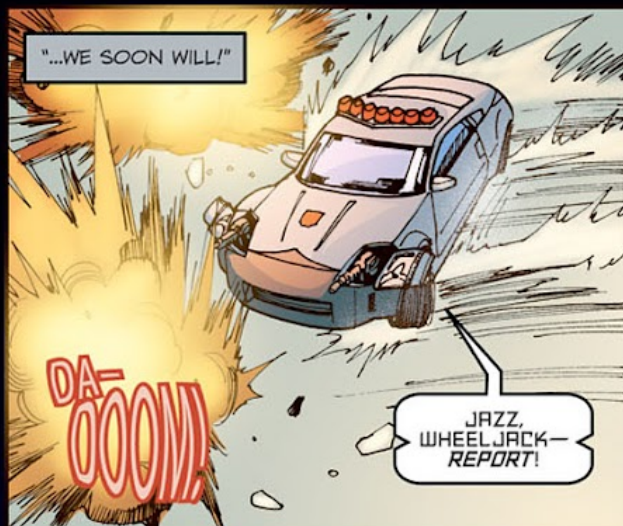
WE *APPEAR* TO
HAVE AN AMERICAN
F-22 RAPTOR, BEING
SHOT AT BY SOME
KIND OF RALLY
VEHICLE.

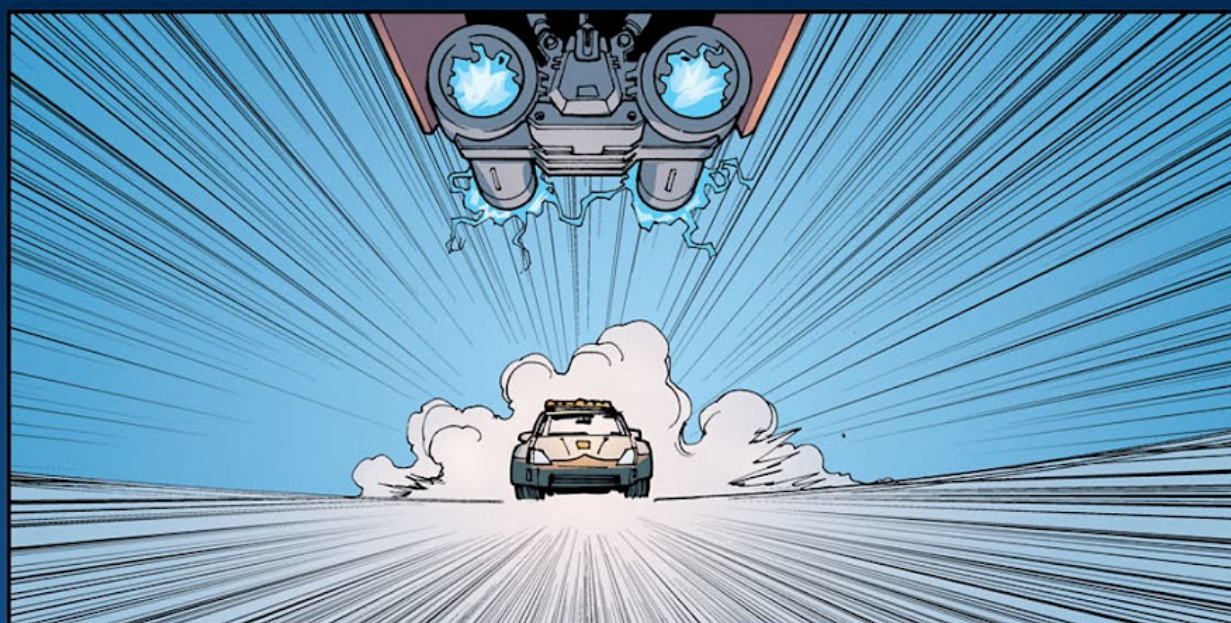
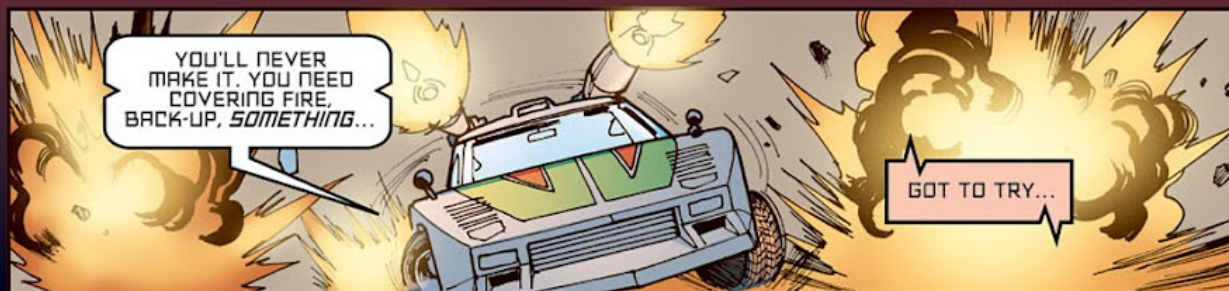
AND A POLICE
PATROL CAR, ALSO
AMERICAN...

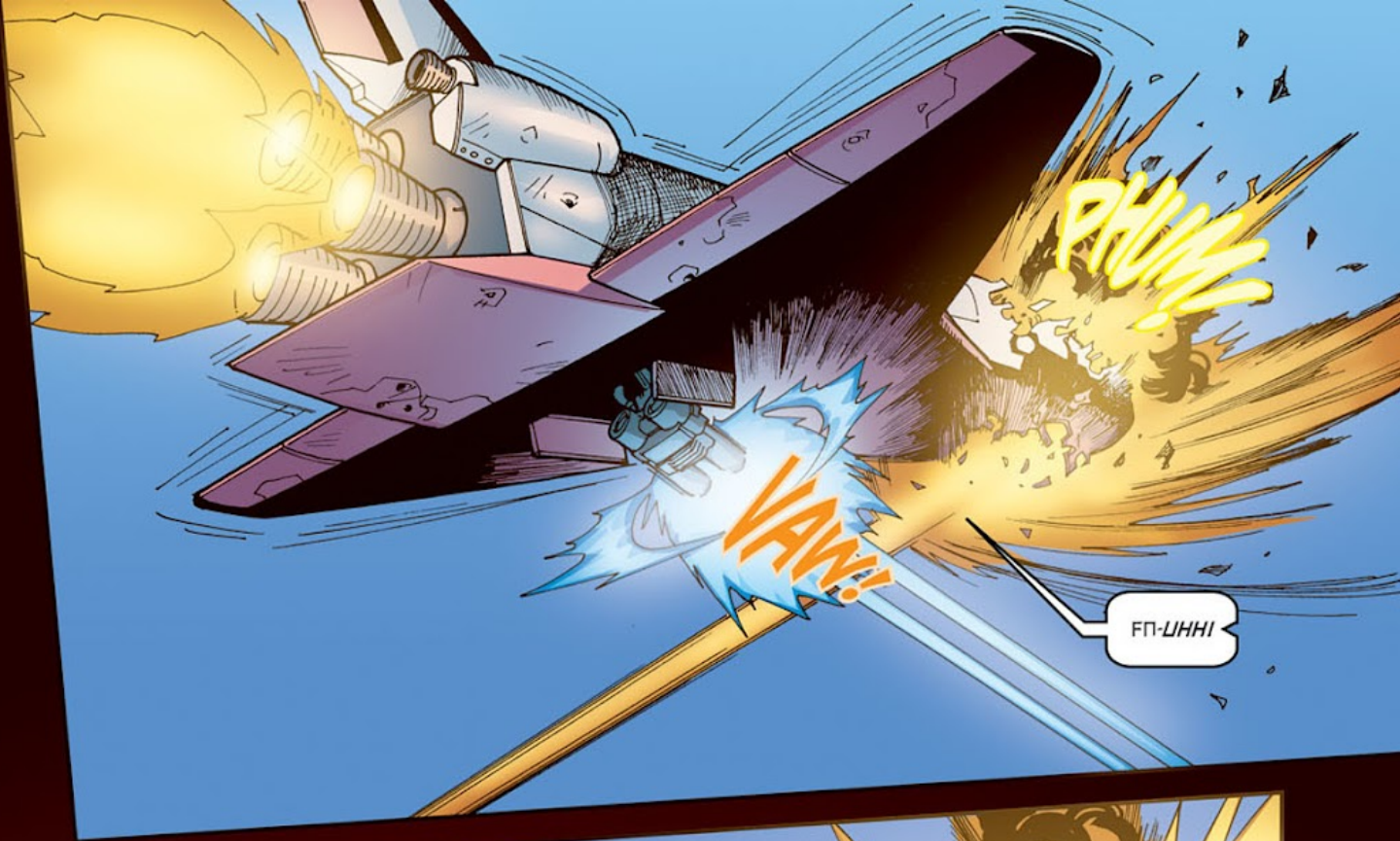
...UNDER
ATTACK FROM
A SPACE
SHUTTLE?

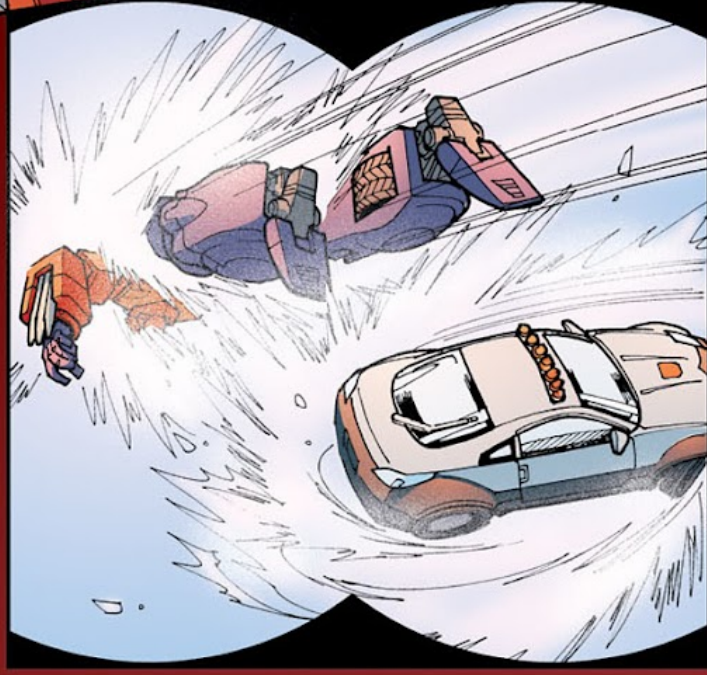
I... DO NOT
UNDERSTAND.

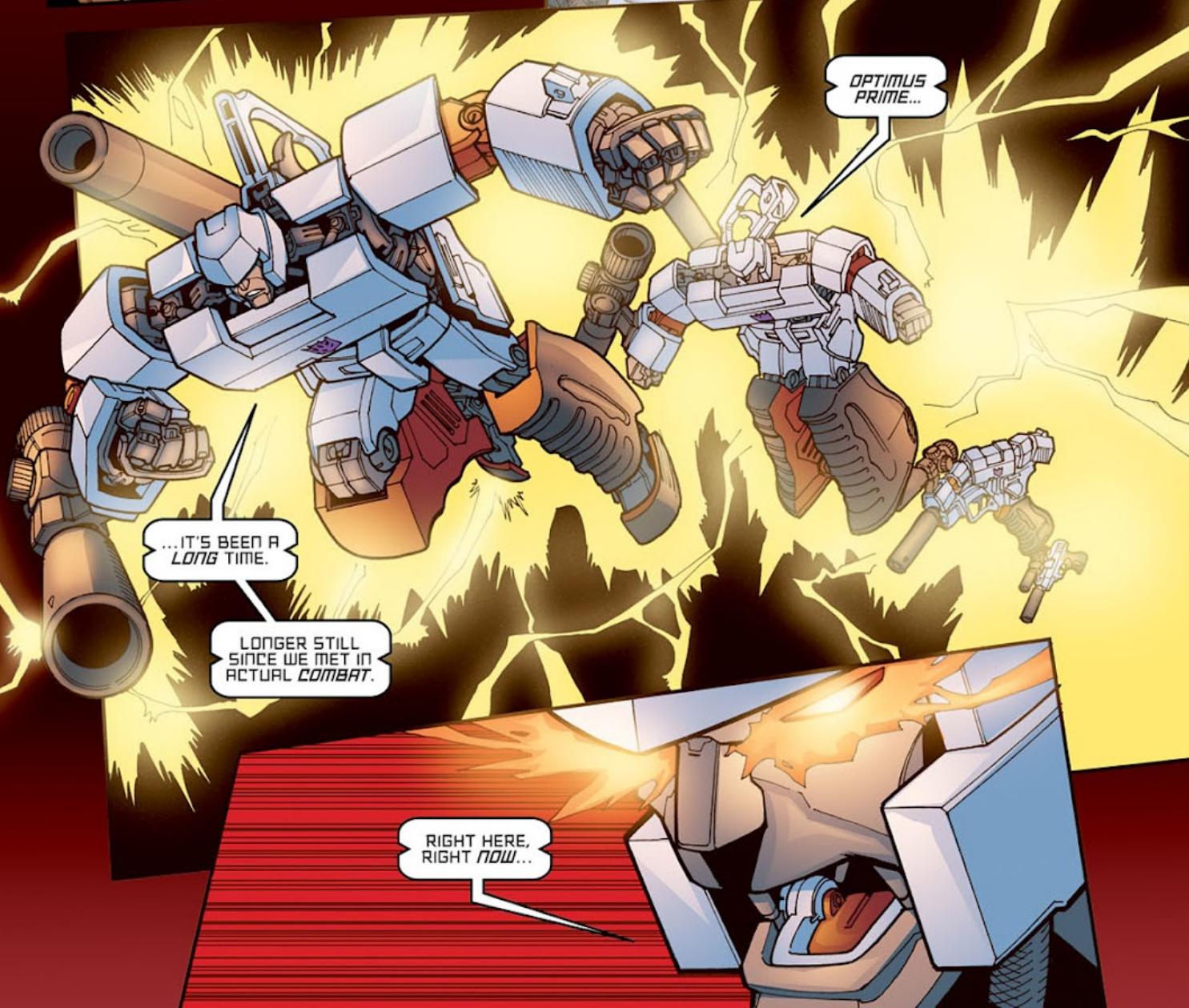
NEITHER
DO I, *BRESKI*...
NEITHER DO I. BUT
I HAVE A BAD
FEELING...

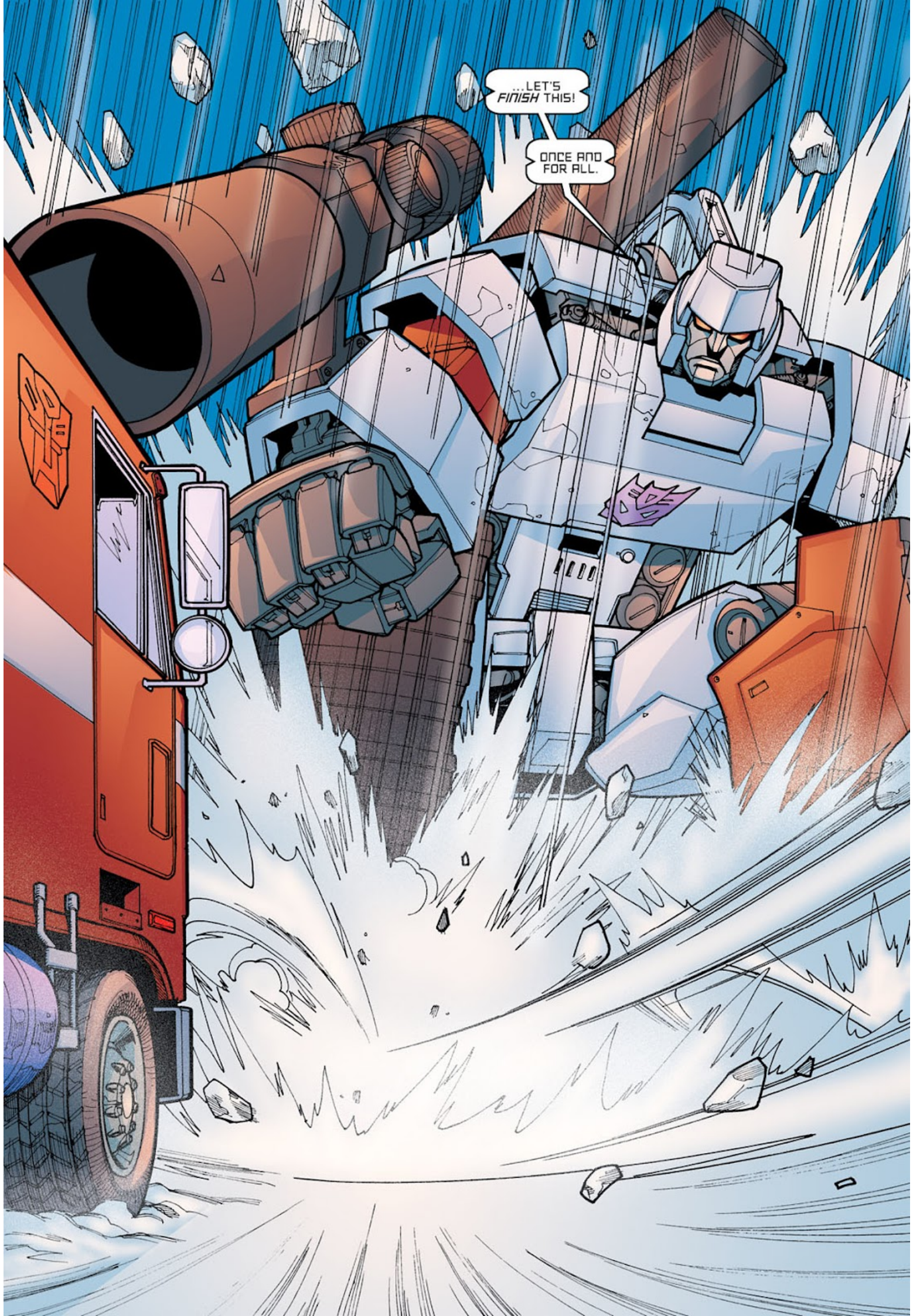








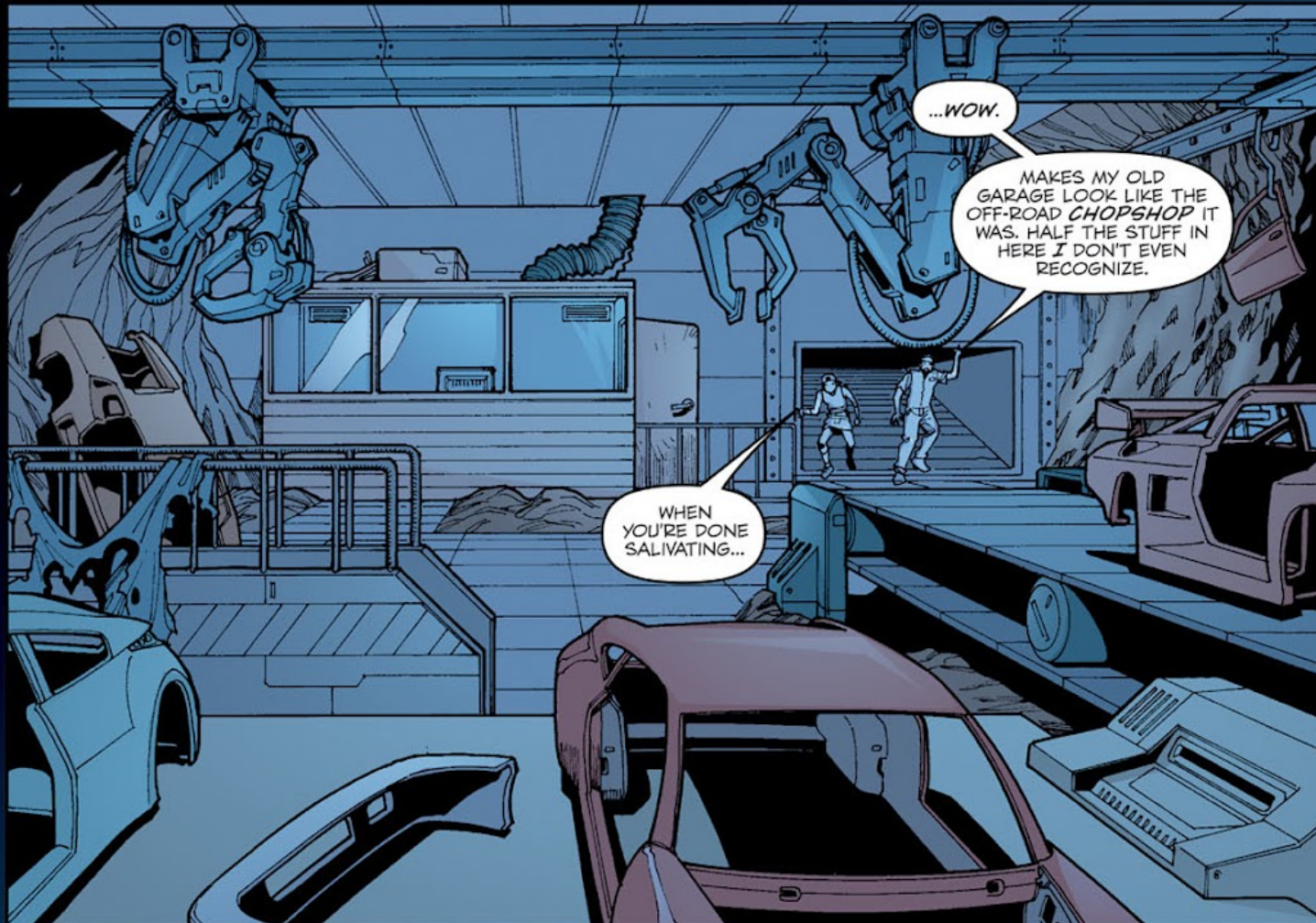




...LET'S
FINISH THIS!

ONCE AND
FOR ALL.

FORT WAYNE:





TO BE CONTINUED...



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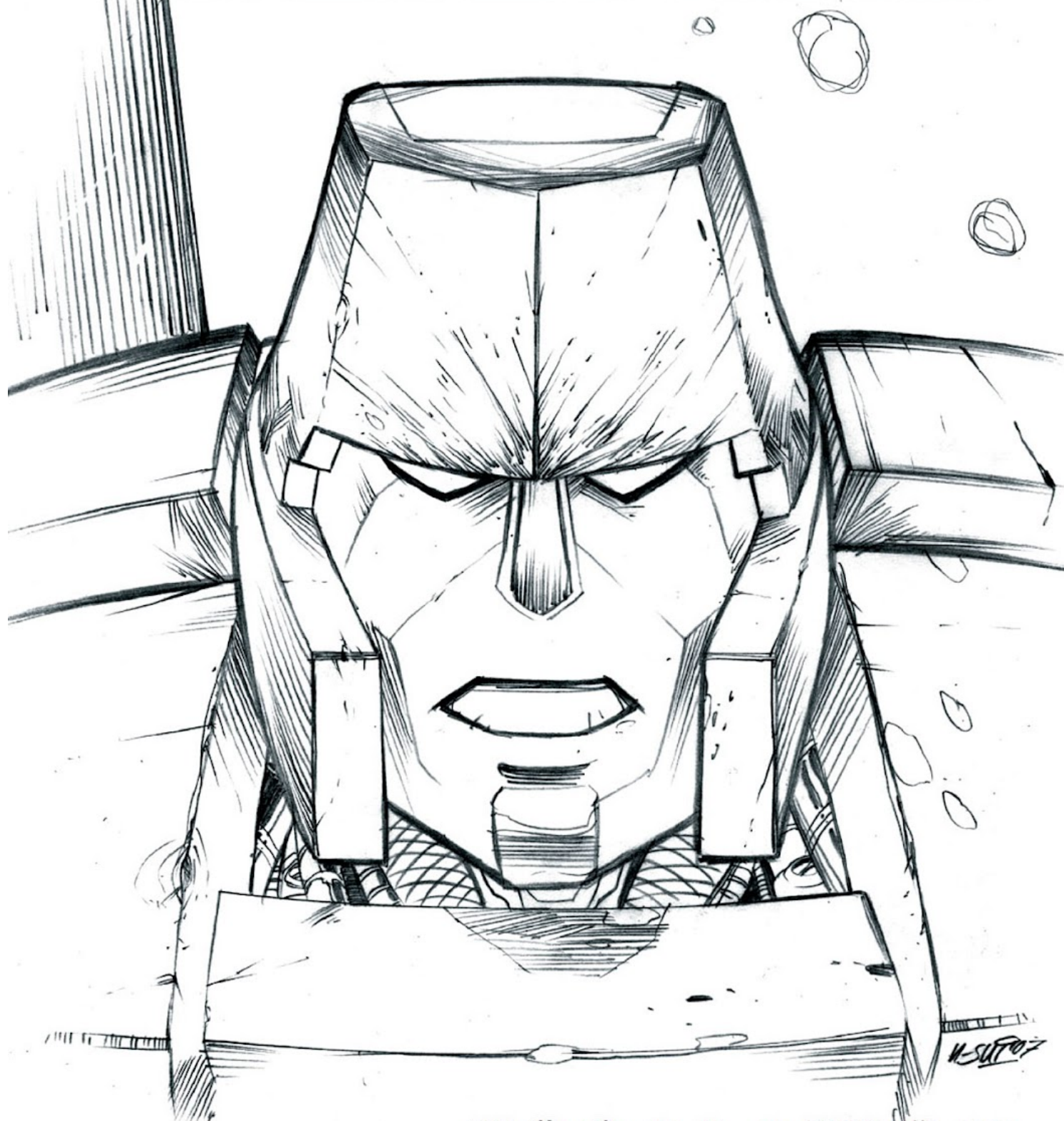
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ISSUE #5
RI-B

THE TRANSFORMERS™

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ESCALATION

THE TRANSFORMERS ESCALATION

WRITTEN BY : **SIMON FURMAN**

ART BY : **E.J. SU**

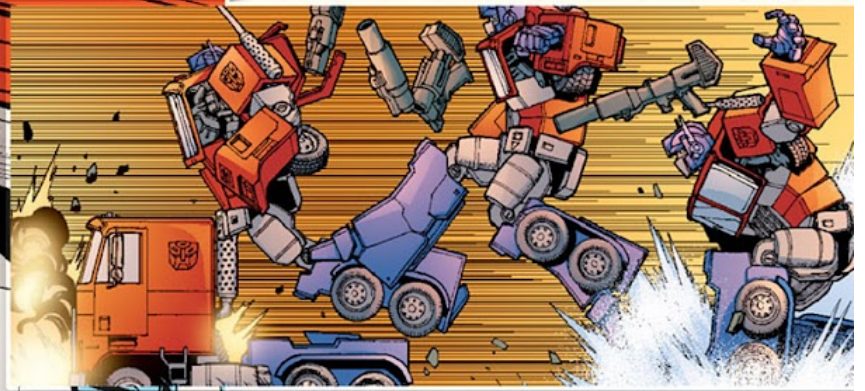
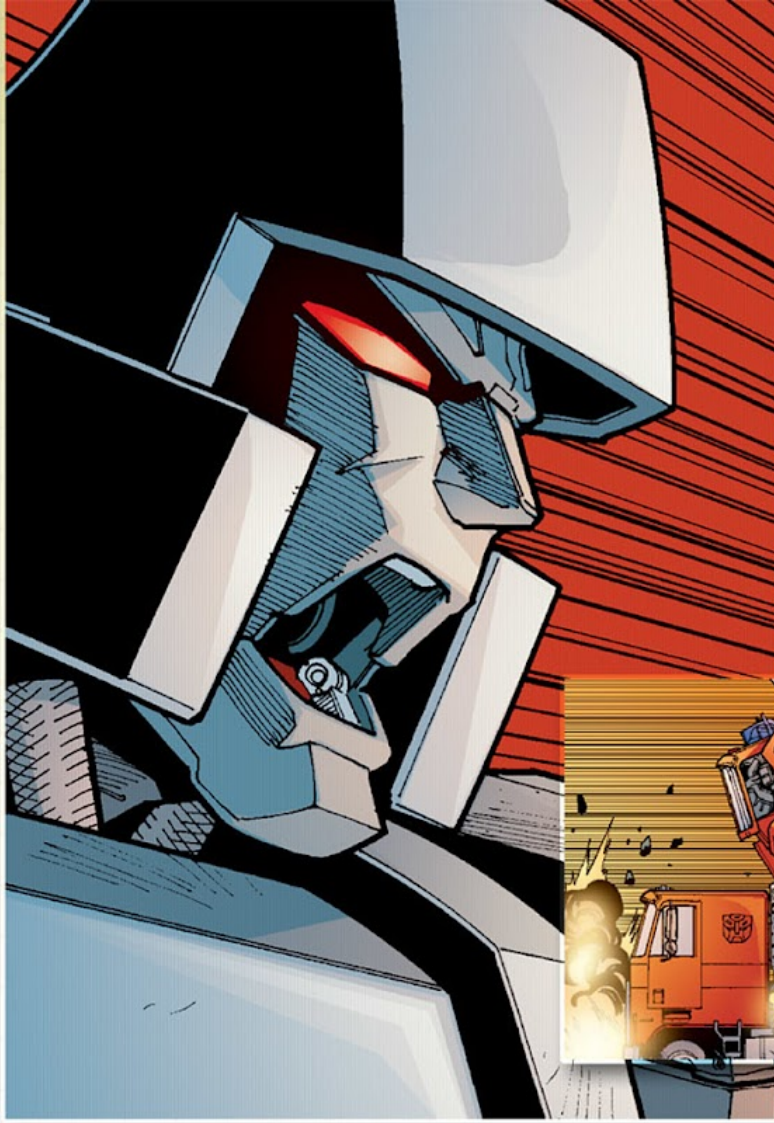
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LETTERS BY : **ROBBIE ROBBINS**

EDITS BY : **CHRIS RYALL & DAN TAYLOR**

COVER BY : **E.J. SU**

VARIANT COVER BY : **KLAUS SCHERWINSKI**



ISSUE NUMBER FIVE

ESCALATION:

In the breakaway Russian state of Brasnya, OPTIMUS PRIME clashes with MEGATRON, while their respective (AUTOBOT and DECEPTICON) forces seek to either capture or eliminate the artificial human GEORGI KOSKA, his cellular template the key to identifying all the other facsimiles currently active on Earth. Meanwhile, in Fort Wayne, Indiana, IRONHIDE and RATCHET wait outside Custom Wheels, while VERITY CARLO and JIMMY PINK investigate a secret underground workshop, in search of clues to the whereabouts of the abducted SUNSTREAKER and HUNTER O'NION...

PHASE TWO CONTINUES...



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Special thanks to Hasbro's Aaron Archer, Elizabeth Griffin, Sheri Lucci and Richard Zambarano for their invaluable assistance.

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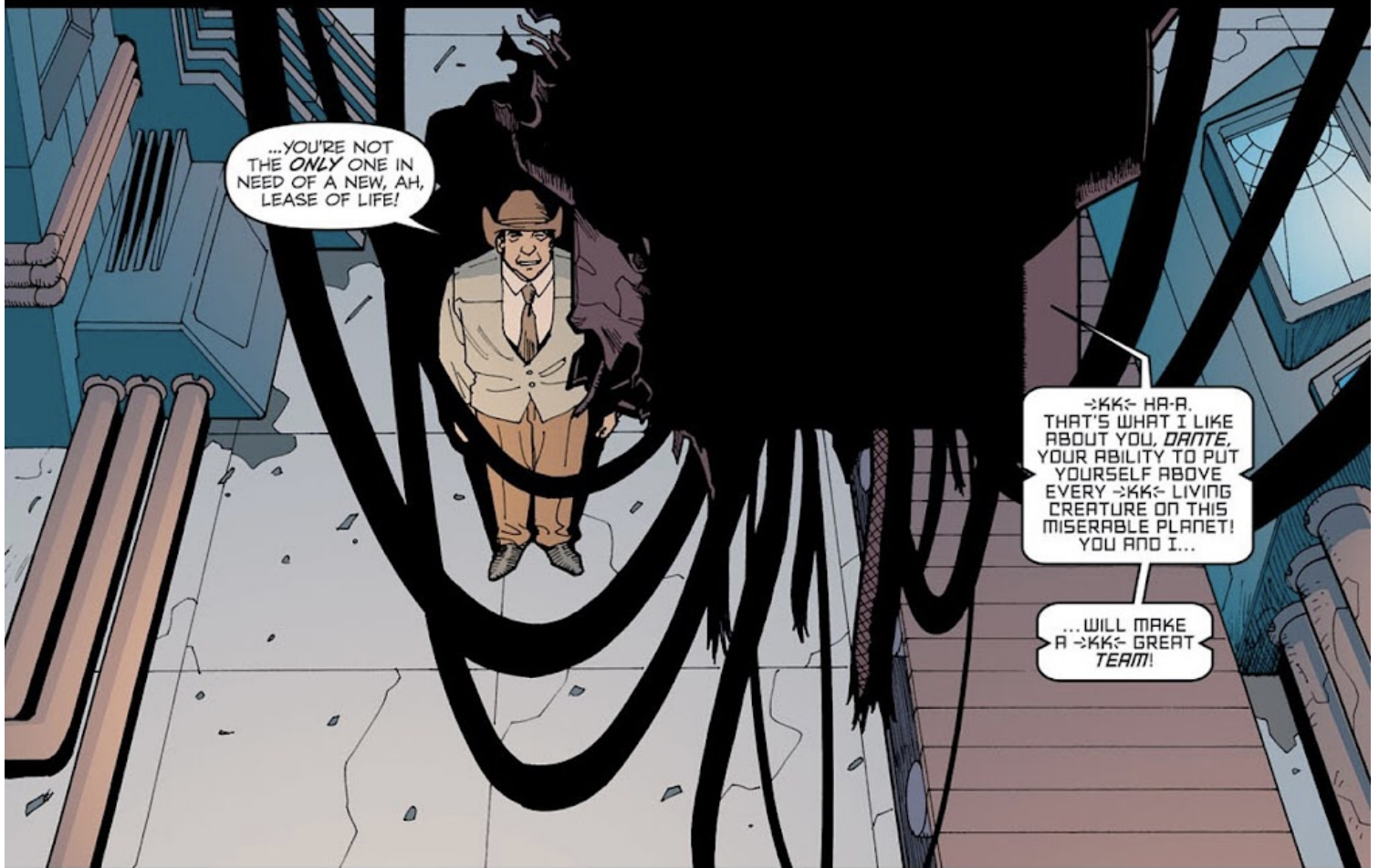
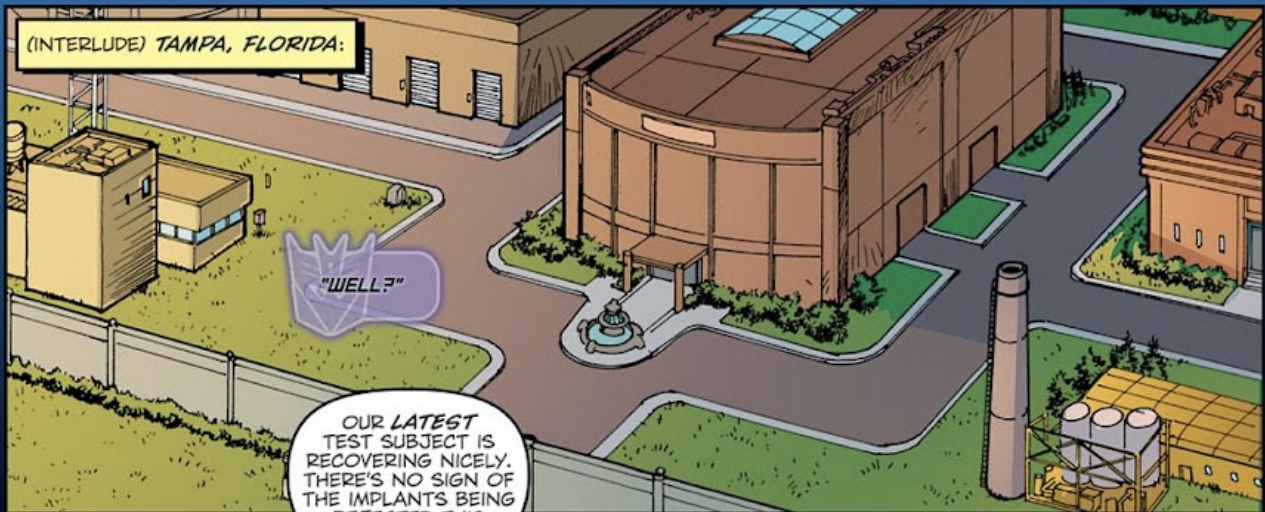
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RUSSIAN STATE OF BRAGNYA:

KHZAAT

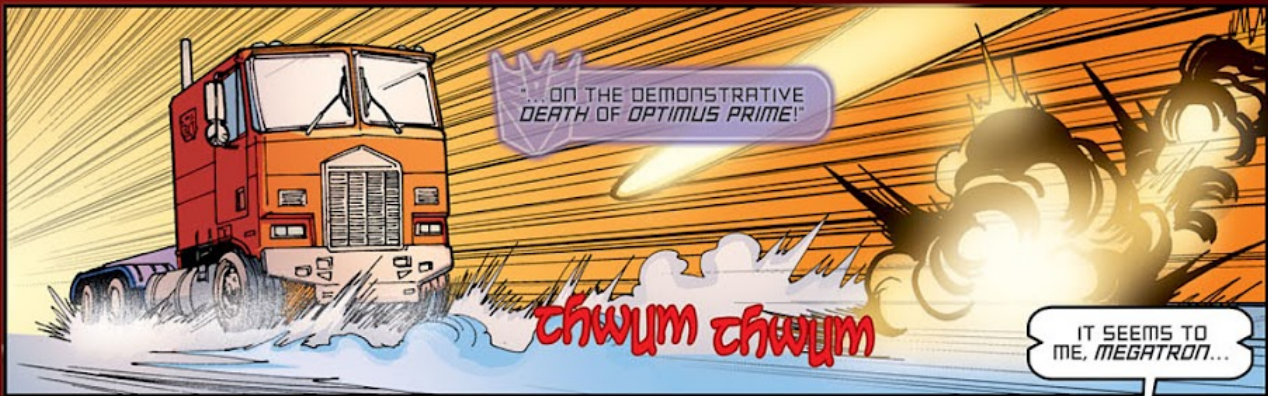
IT'S BEEN FAR
TOO LONG...

...SINCE I
REALLY CUT
LOOSE!

THE ONLY
DOWNSIDE OF A
COMMAND-LEVEL
EXISTENCE.

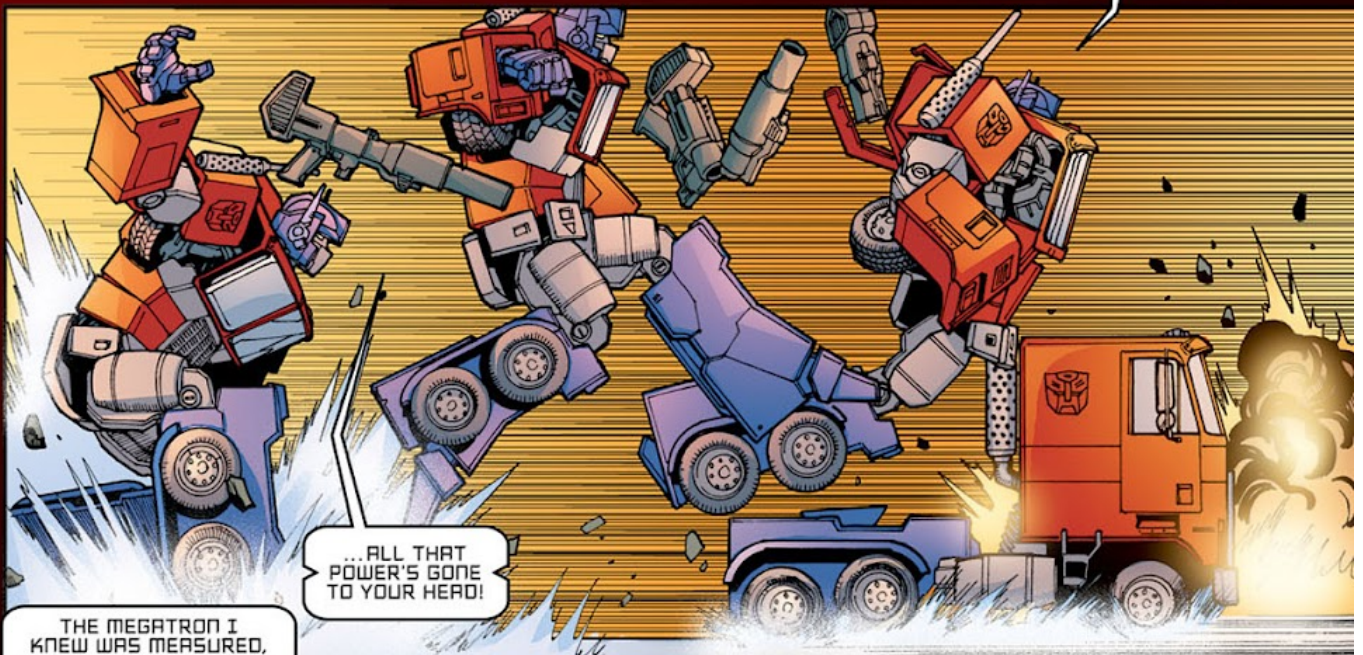
AT LEAST NOW,
THANKS TO THE WONDER
OF STARScream's ORE-13,
I CAN EXPEND AS MUCH
ENERGY AS I LIKE...

SKAON



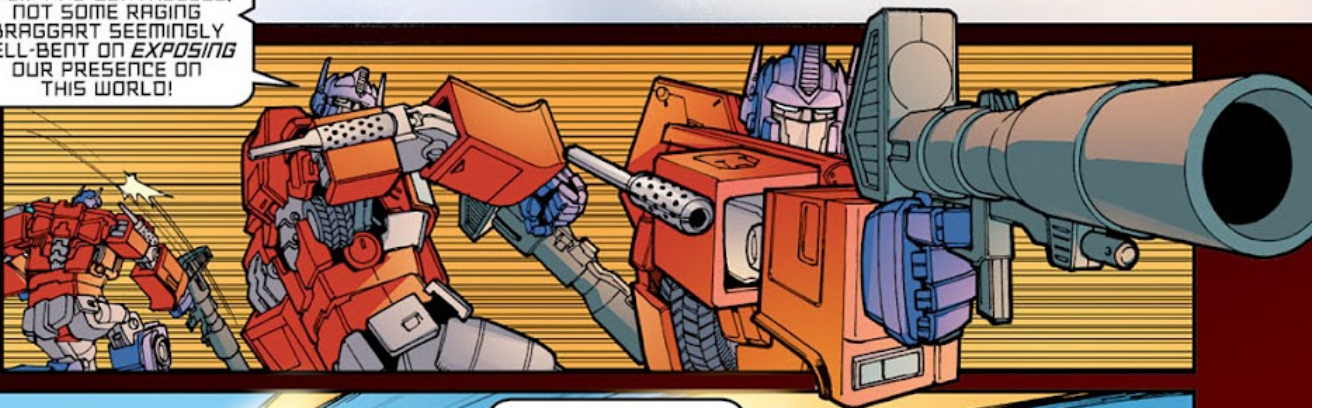
CHWUM CHWUM

IT SEEMS TO ME, MEGATRON...



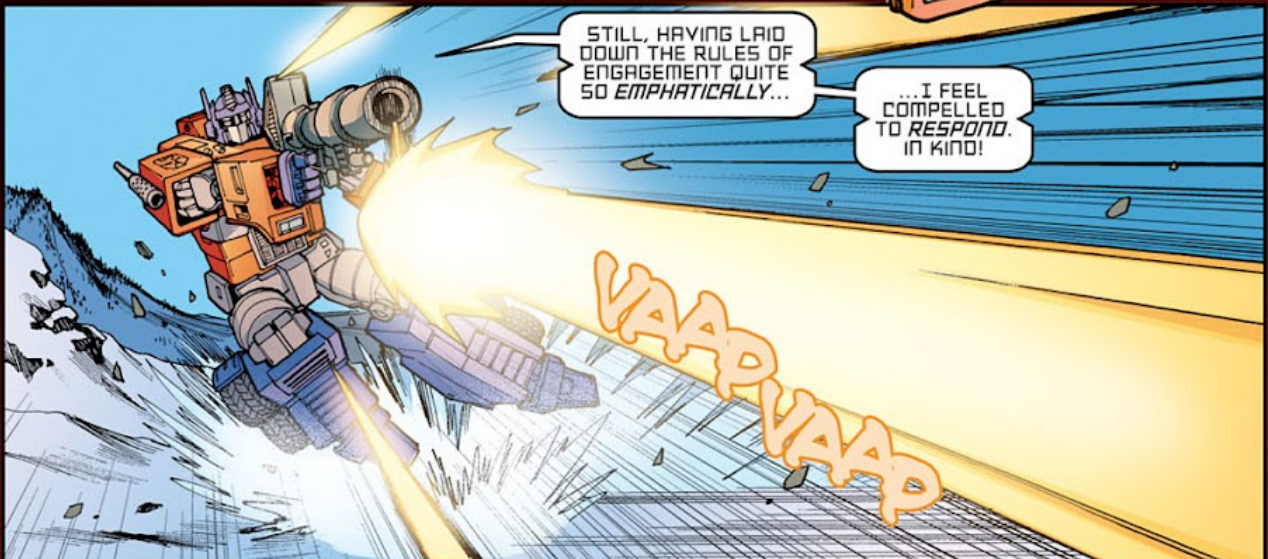
THE MEGATRON I KNEW WAS MEASURED, CALM AND CONTROLLED, NOT SOME RAGING BRAGGART SEEMINGLY HELL-BENT ON EXPOSING OUR PRESENCE ON THIS WORLD!

...ALL THAT POWER'S GONE TO YOUR HEAD!

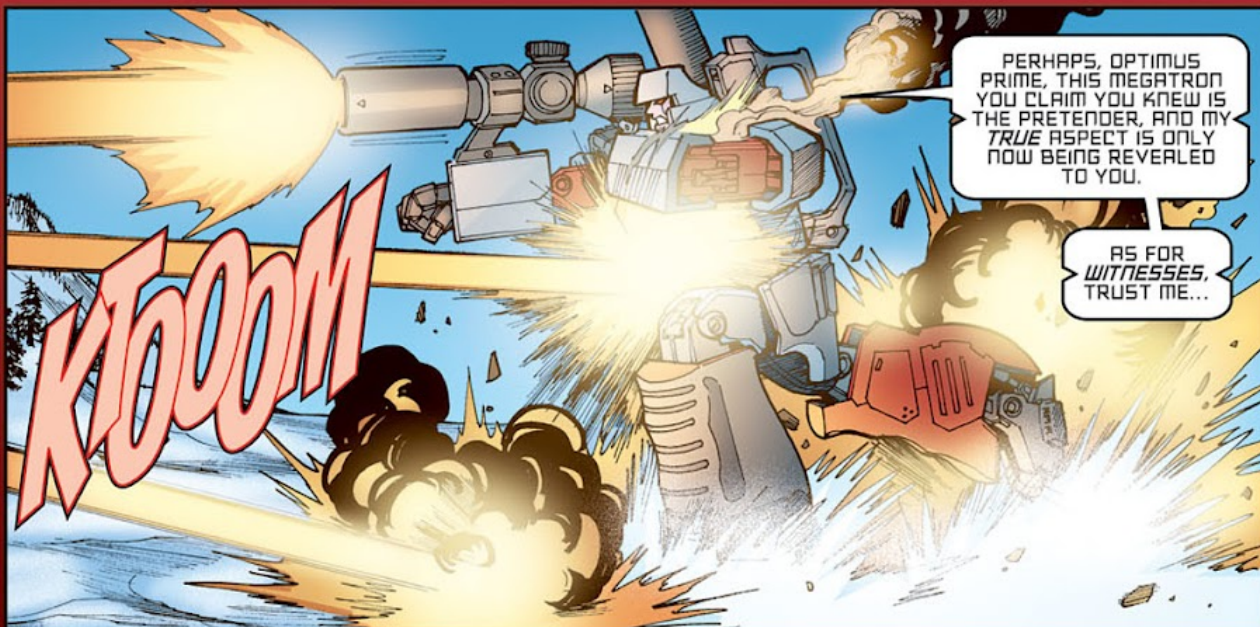


STILL, HAVING LAID DOWN THE RULES OF ENGAGEMENT QUITE SO EMPHATICALLY...

...I FEEL COMPELLED TO RESPOND. IN KIND!



VAAP VAAP



PERHAPS, OPTIMUS PRIME, THIS MEGATRON YOU CLAIM YOU KNEW IS THE PRETENDER, AND MY *TRUE* ASPECT IS ONLY NOW BEING REVEALED TO YOU.

AS FOR WITNESSES, TRUST ME...



... THERE WILL BE *NONE*.



UHH! YOU ALWAYS *DID* KNOW WHAT TO SAY...

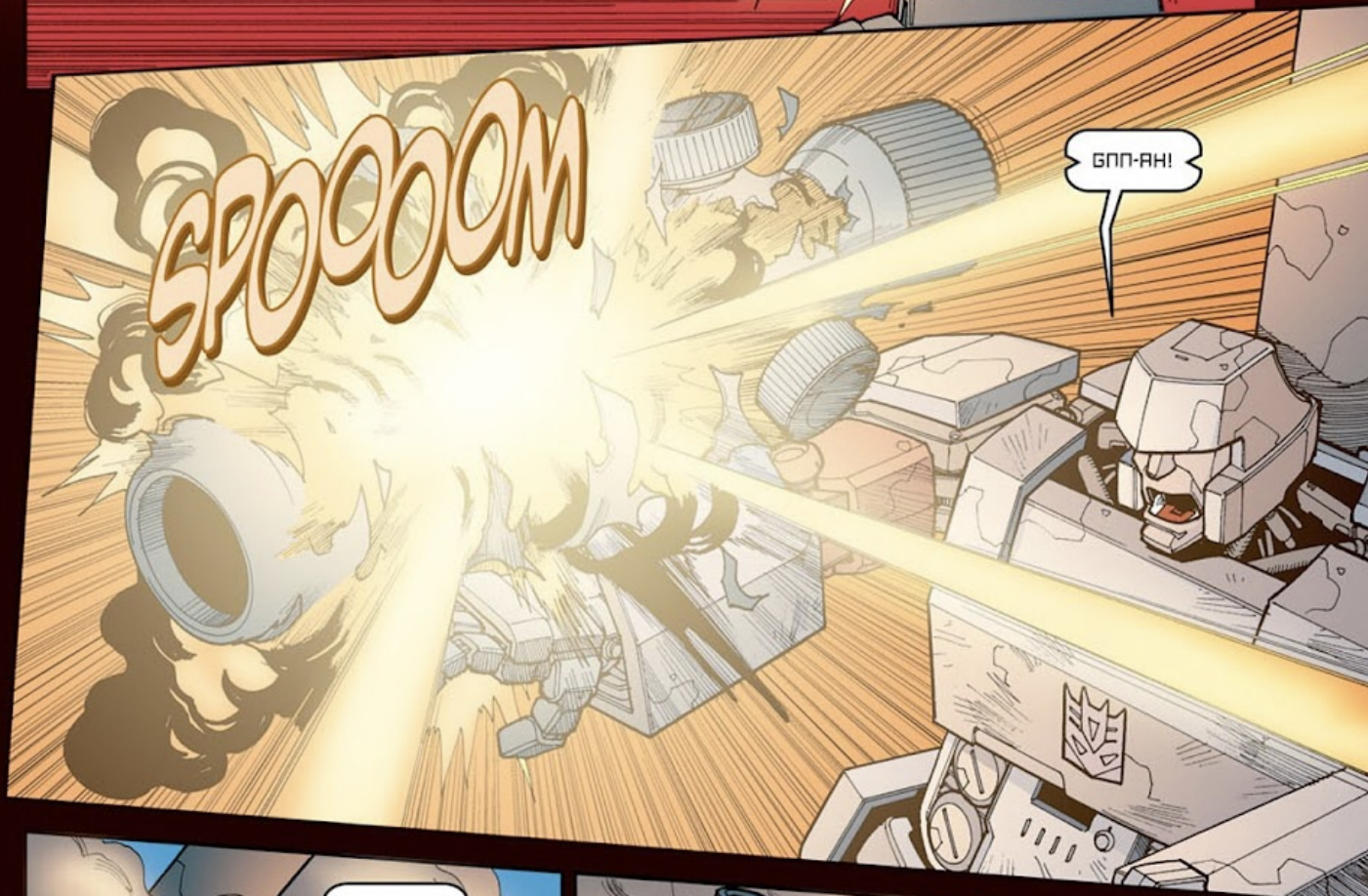
ZRAKT





...TO BRING OUT
THE *BEST* IN ME!

SPUT



ГОН-АИ!

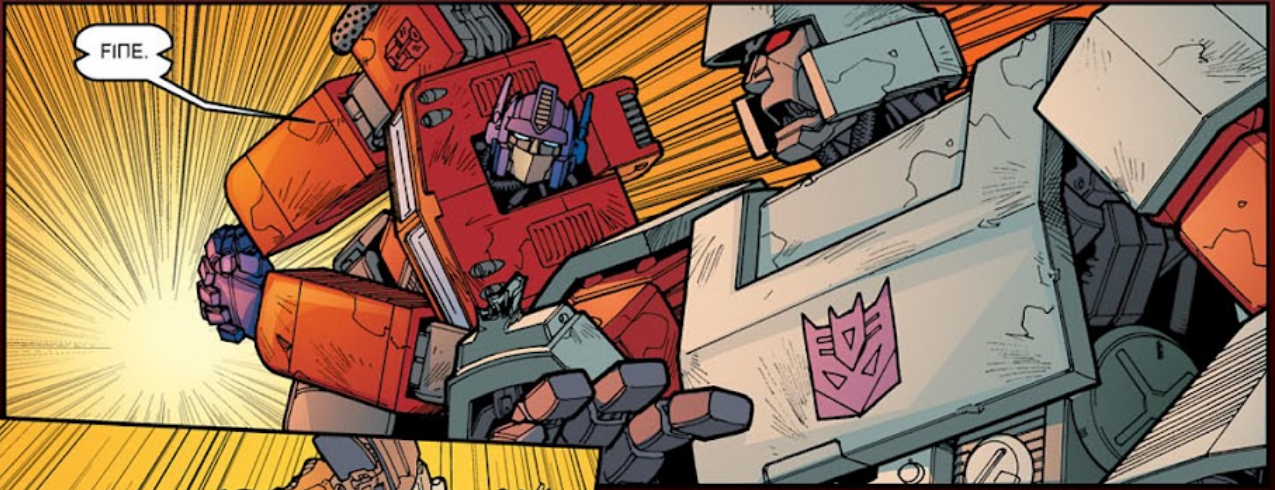


RRRAGH!

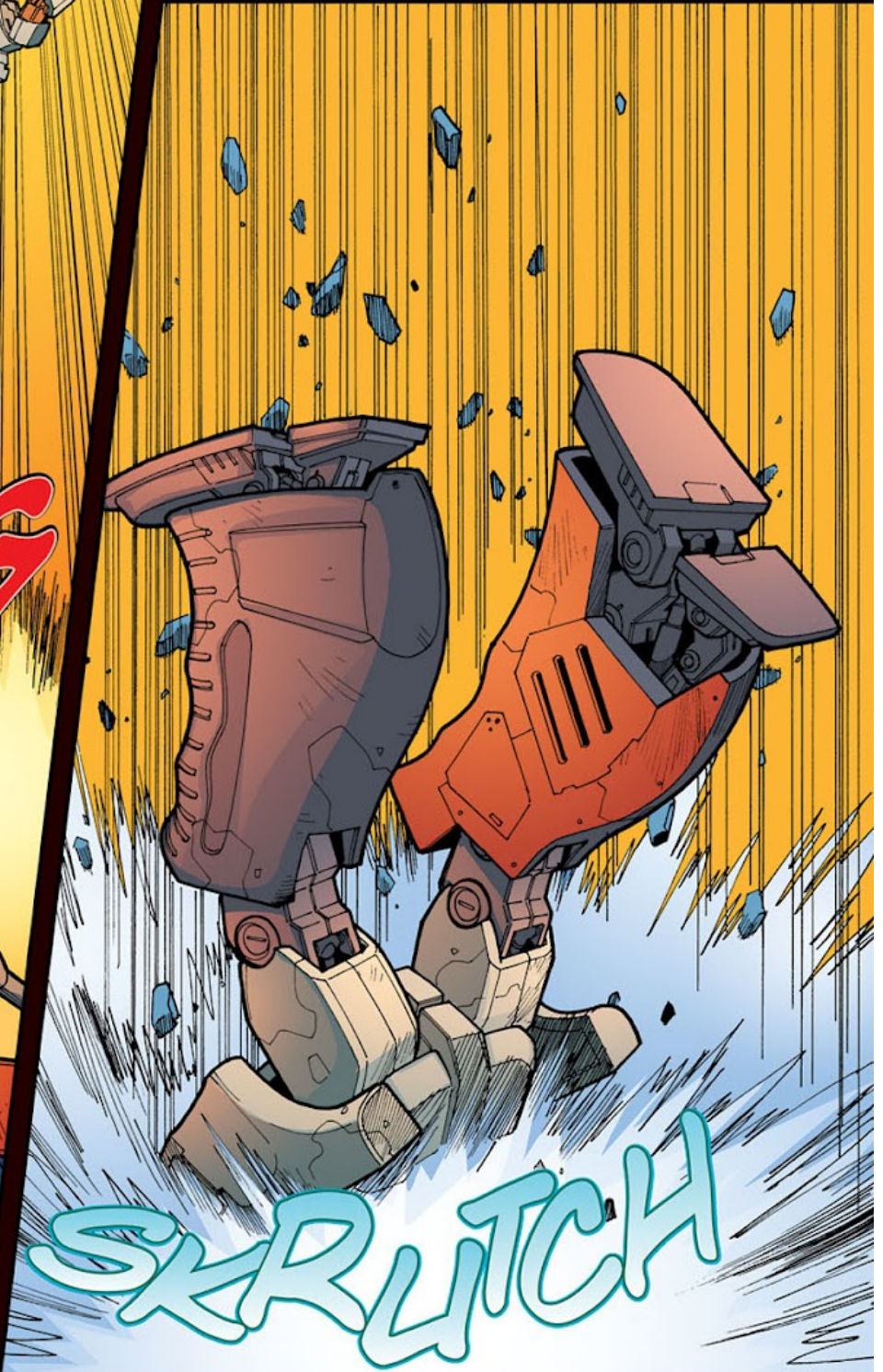
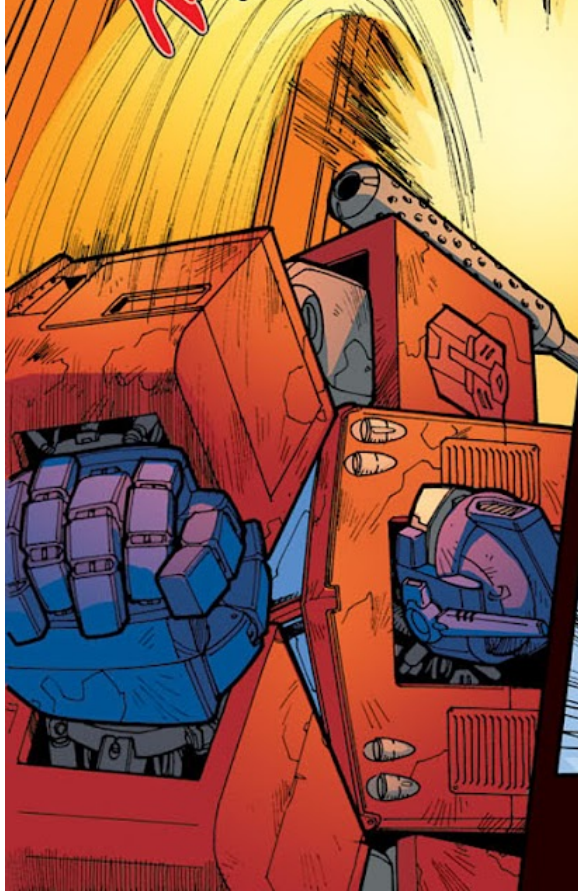


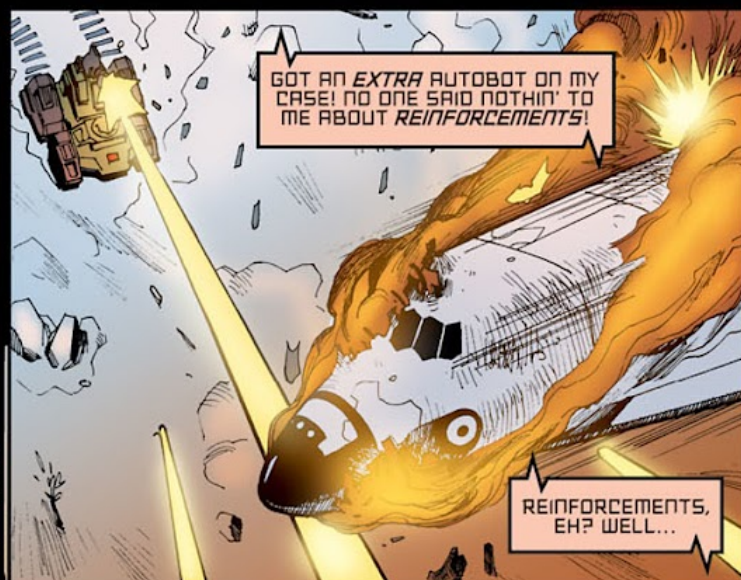
I NEED NO *WEAPONS*
TO KILL YOU, PRIME...

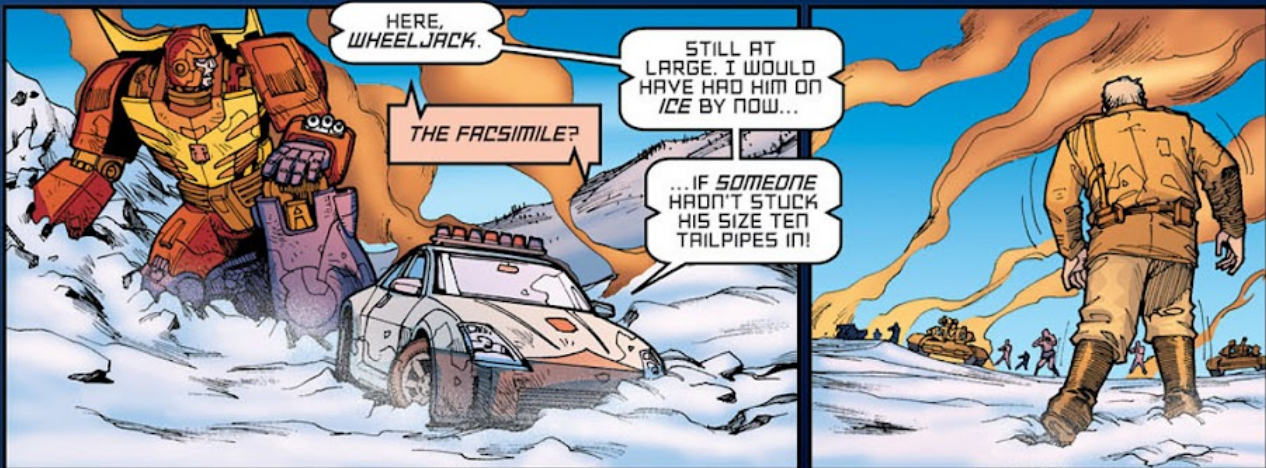
...BARE HANDS
WILL SUFFICE!

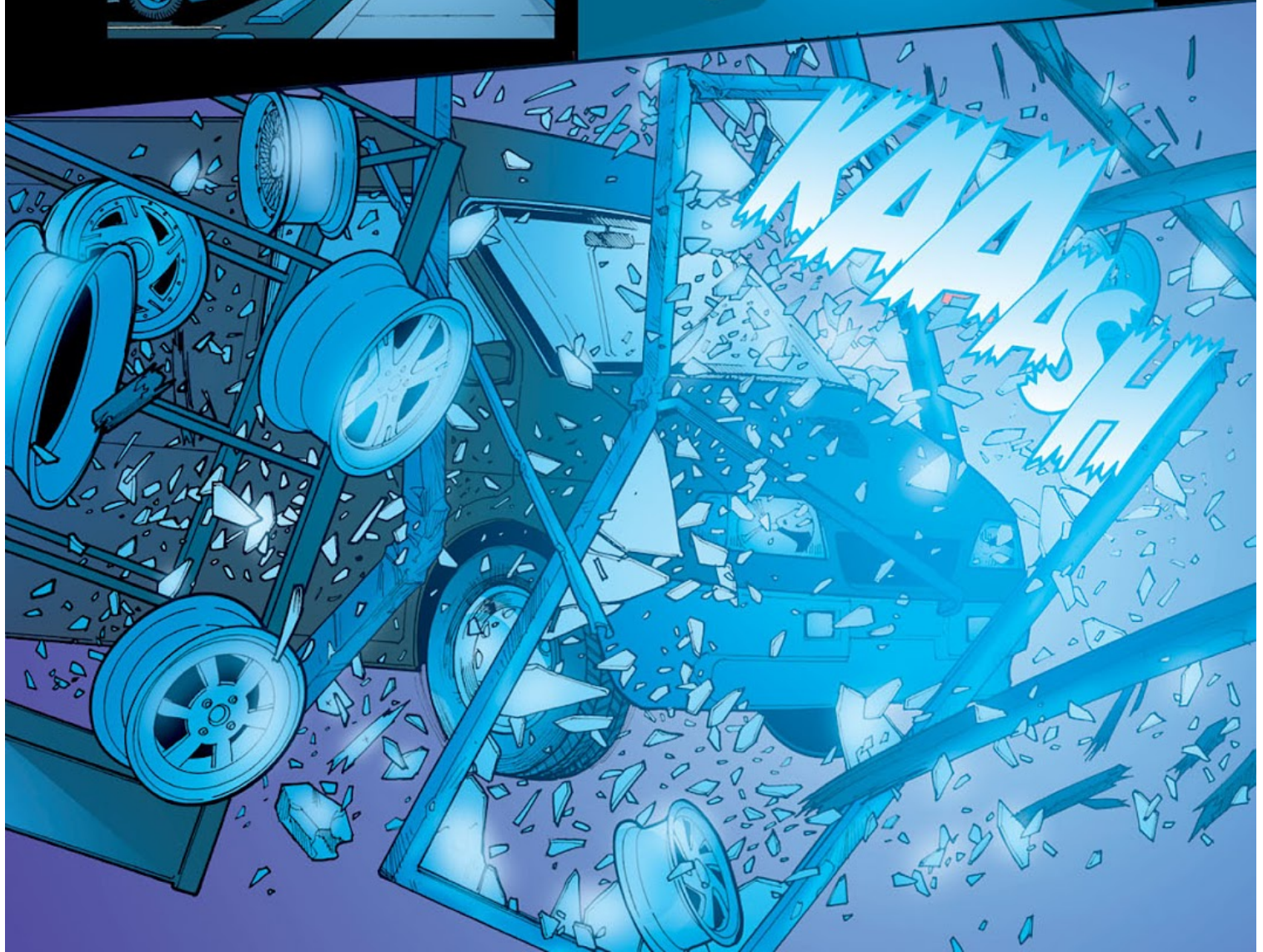
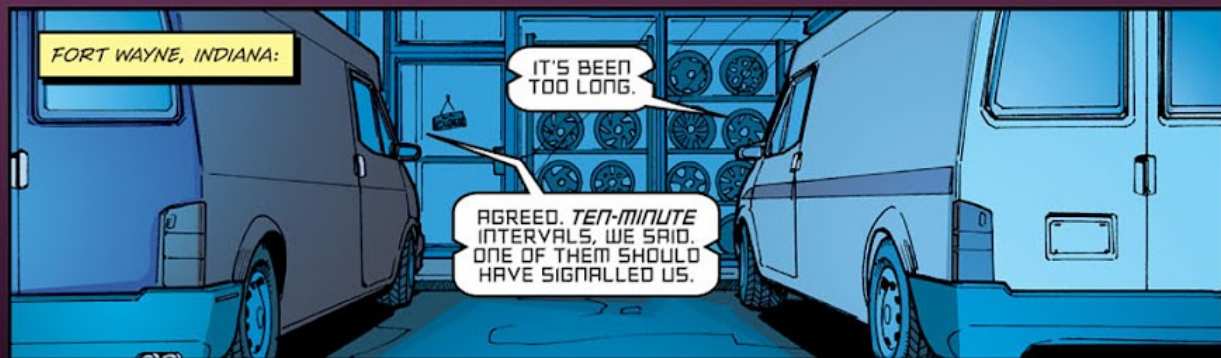


KRAANGG











CHOKKT

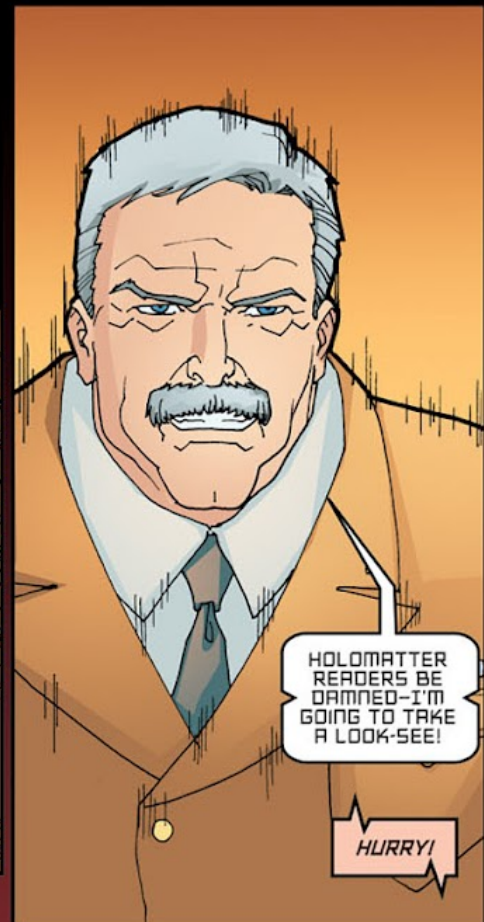
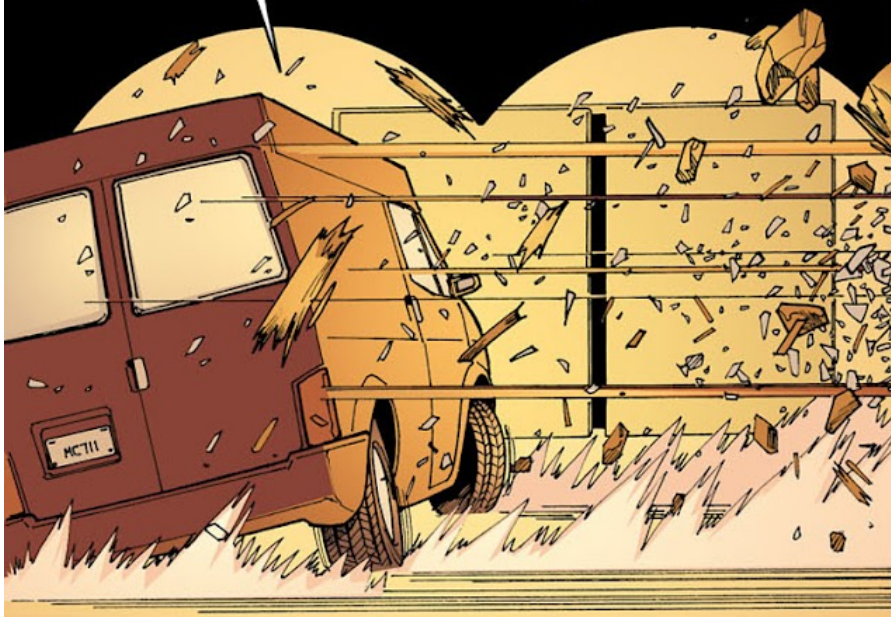


THENK



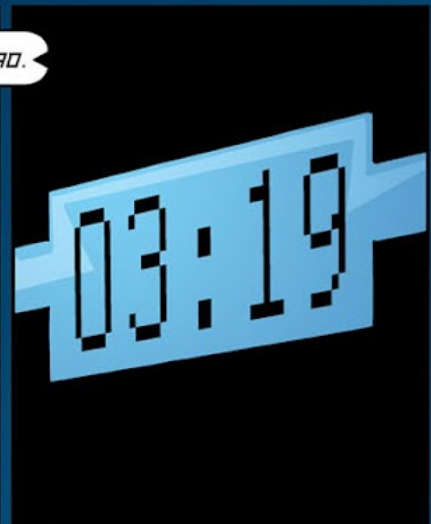
RATCHET—
THERE'S SOME
KIND OF
CONCEALED
ENTRANCE BACK
HERE.

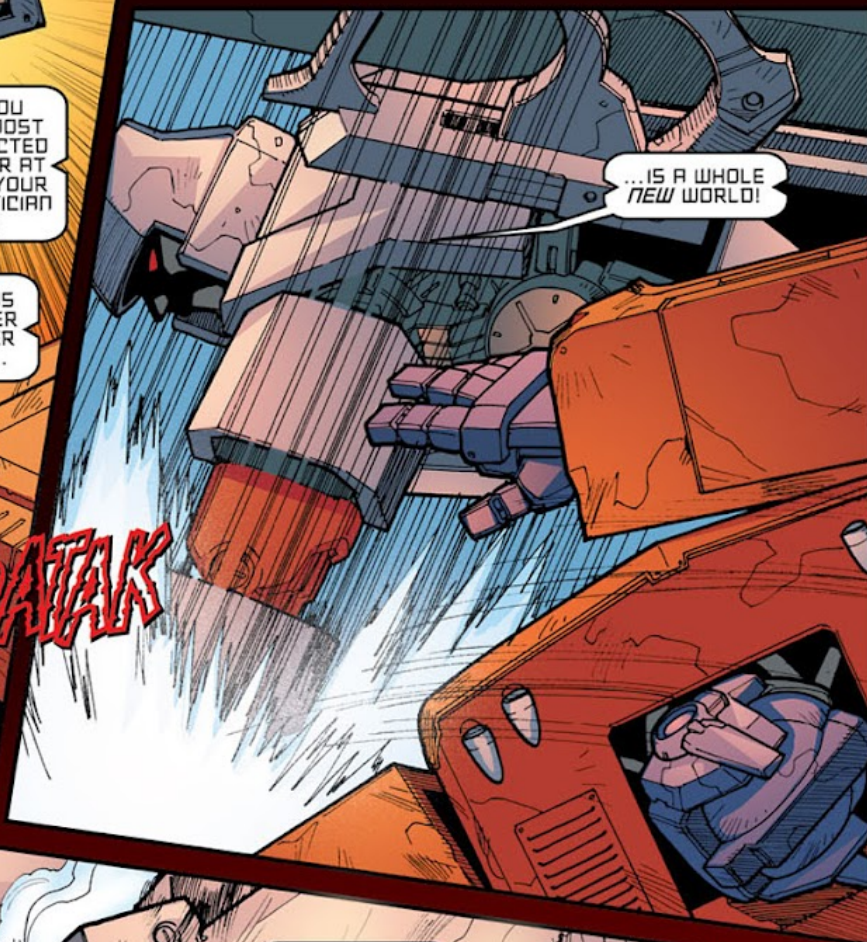
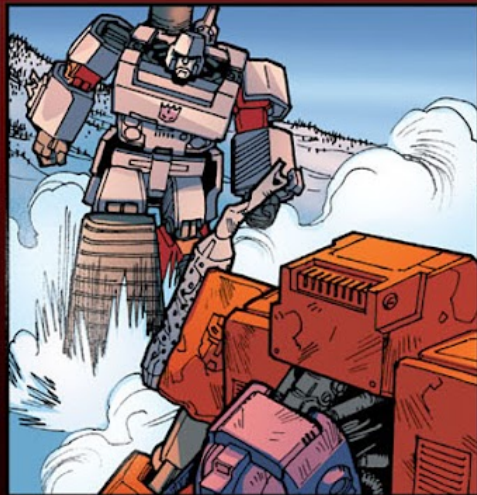
ACCORDING TO
MY SENSOR
PROBES, IT LEADS
NOWHERE: A BIG,
BLACK NOTHING.

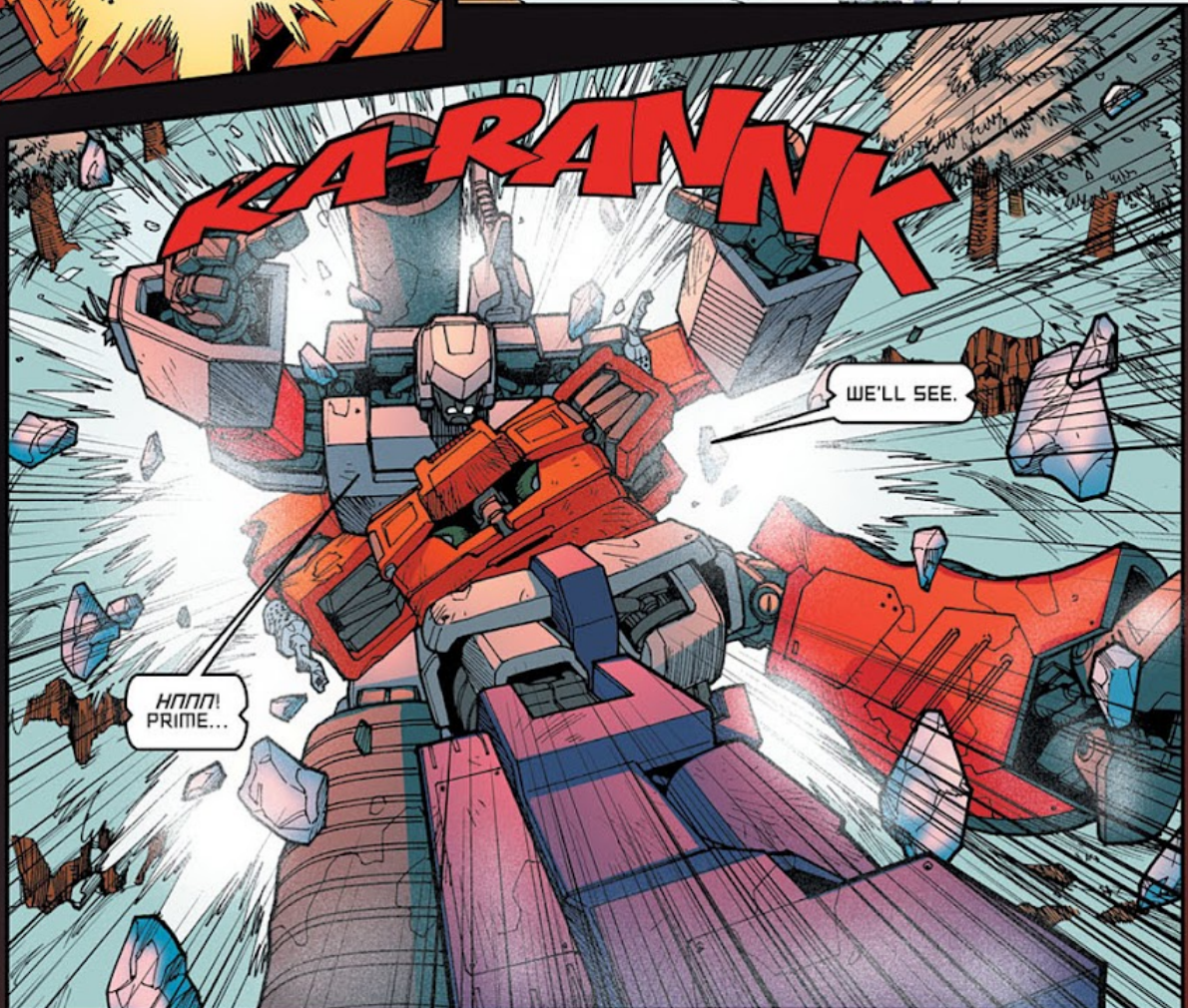
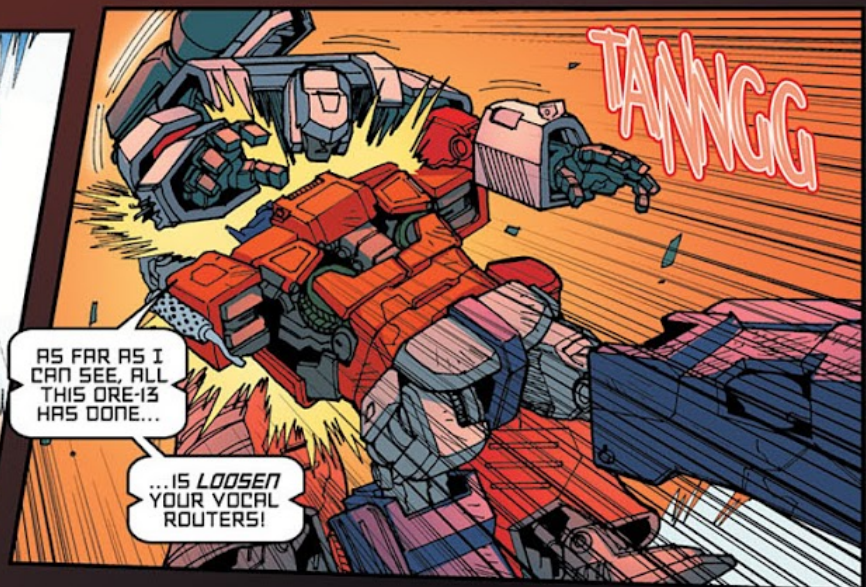


HOLOMATTER
READERS BE
DAMNED—I'M
GOING TO TAKE
A LOOK-SEE!

HURRY!







...YOU WON'T
BELIEVE THE
THINGS I CAN
DO NOW!



VAASH

PUVAHI!

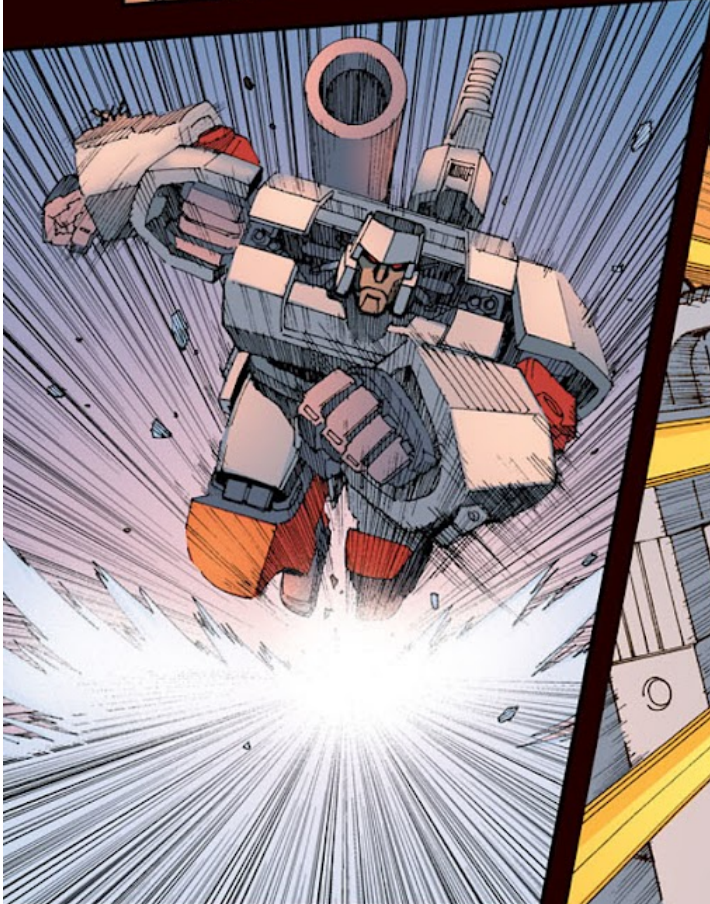


KK-HH...



YOU AND I
HAVE A LOT OF
HISTORY, PRIME.
SO I'LL DO YOU
THE HONOR...

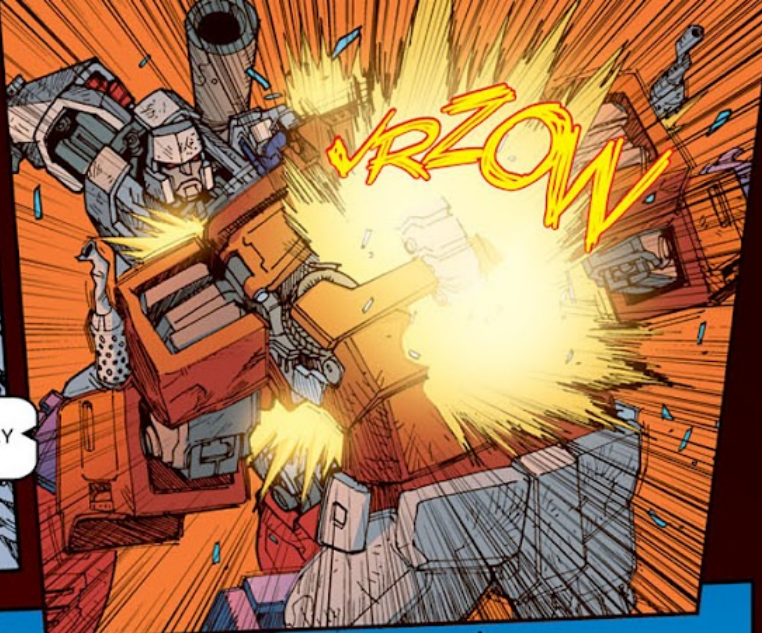
...OF MAKING
THIS QUICK...



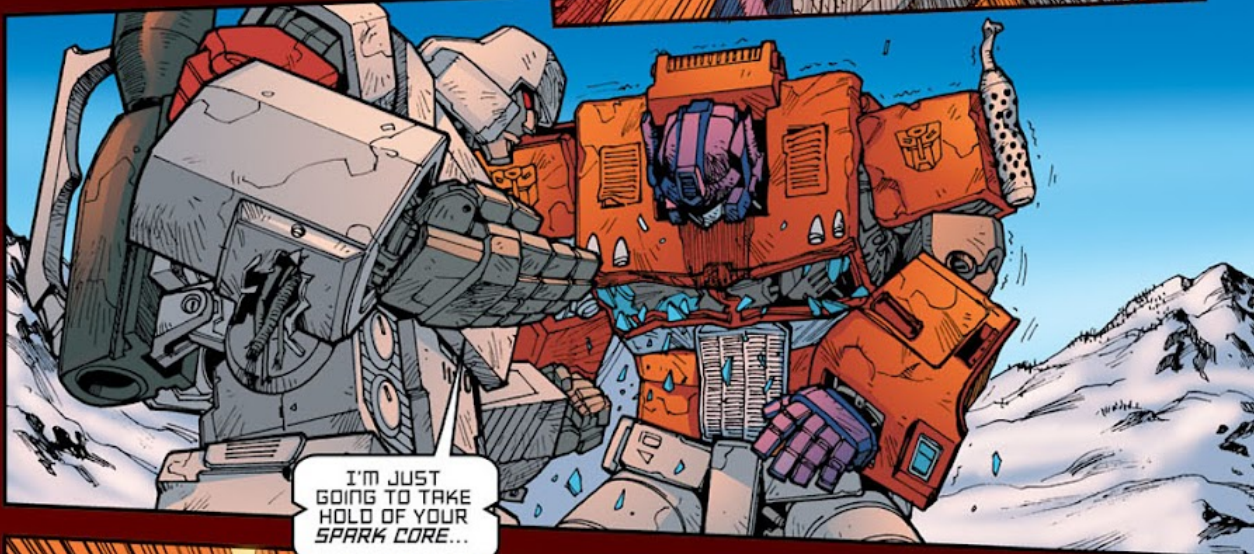
KATOOOM



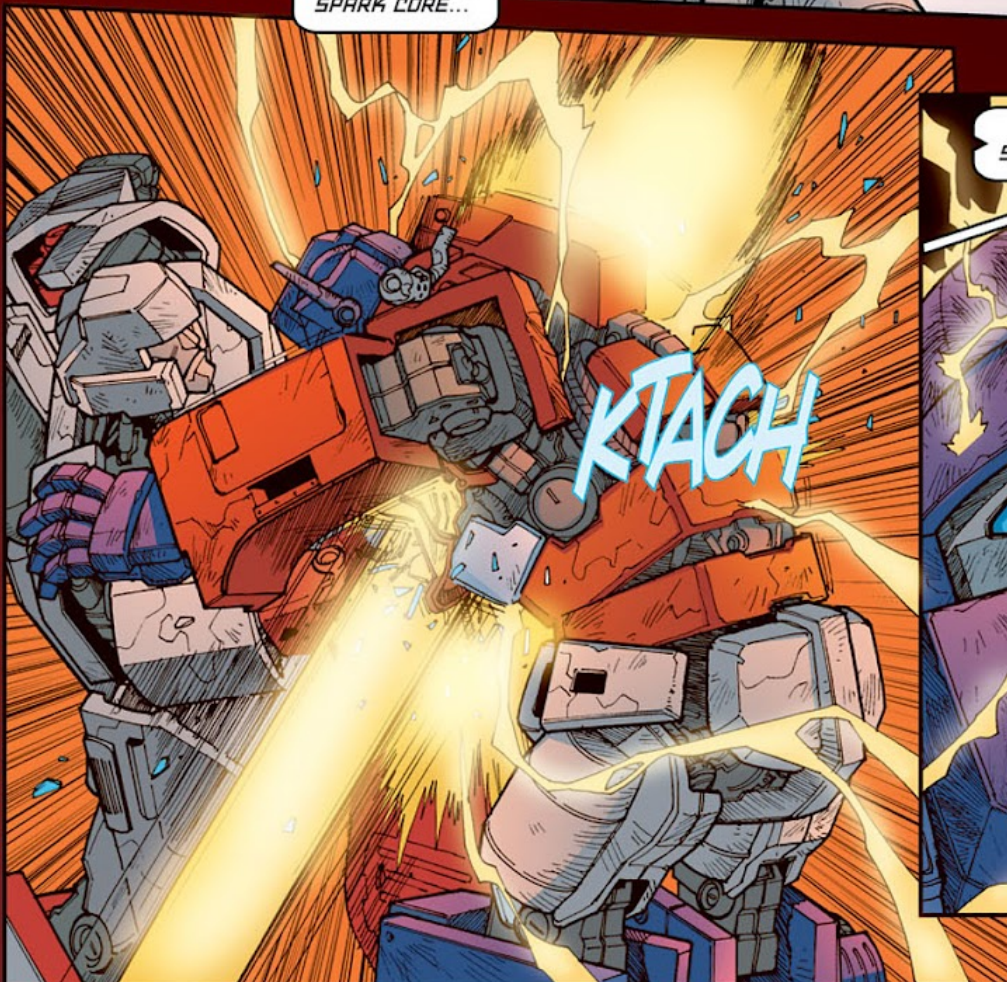
...IF
EXCRUITATINGLY
PAINFUL!



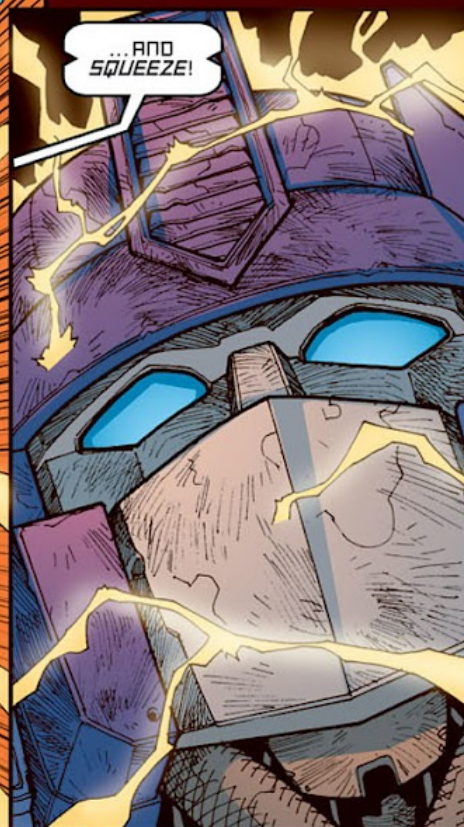
VRZOW



I'M JUST
GOING TO TAKE
HOLD OF YOUR
SPARK CORE...



KTACH



...AND
SQUEEZE!



MUCH AS I HATE TO ADMIT IT, I THINK YOU'RE RIGHT. OUR LITTLE FACSIMILE...

...HAS HIMSELF A DEATH WISH.



LIBERTY FOR BRASNIA!
DEATH TO THE INVADERS!



ONE OF US'LL HAVE TO RUN INTERFERENCE.

ER, IF THAT'S OPERATIONAL JARGON FOR GETTING SHOT AT... I VOTE YOU.

YEAH, THANKS.



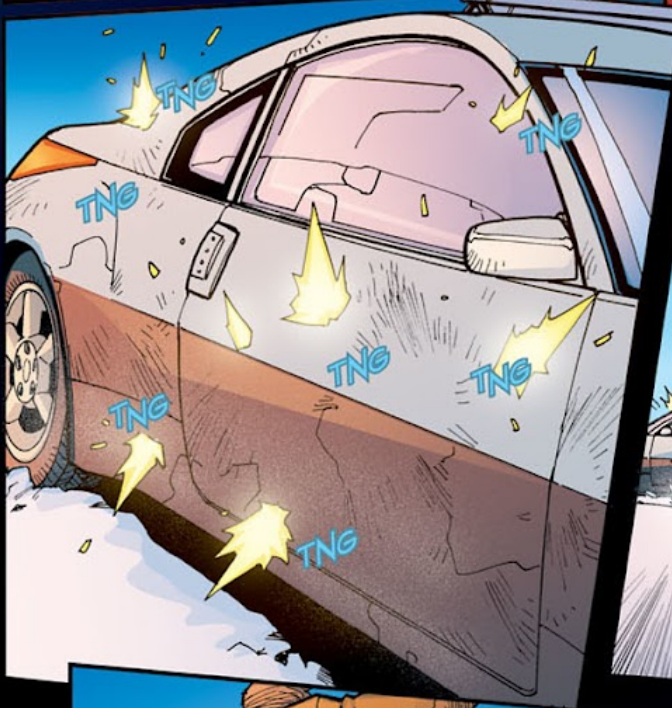
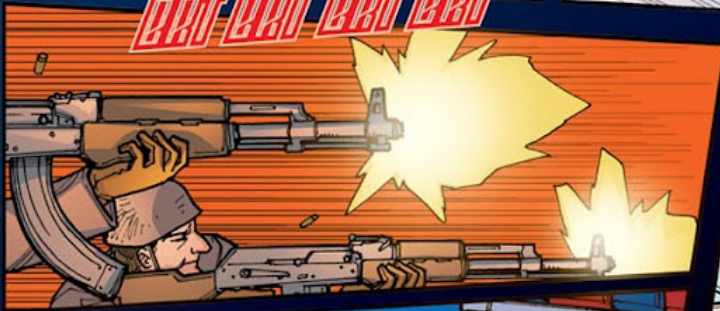
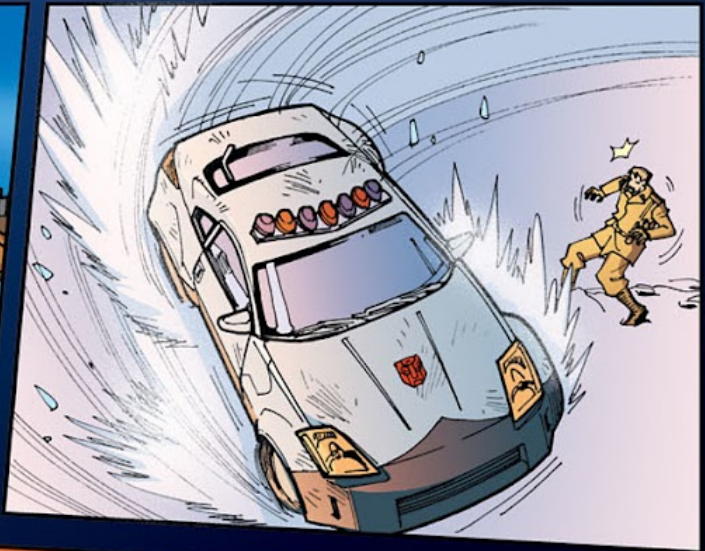
WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR? THIS MAN IS A KNOWN AND DANGEROUS TERRORIST!



FIRE AT WILL!



BAT BAT BAT BAT



НП. ПОШ,
HOT ROD...

...ПОШ!



ННТ!



YOU'D BE WELL ADVISED...



...TO LOWER
THOSE
WEAPONS...



...AND GO *BACK*
TO WHEREVER
YOU CALL HOME.



I'D LISTEN TO
HIM. SERIOUSLY.
THIS IS *NOT*
YOUR FIGHT.

AND THIS...

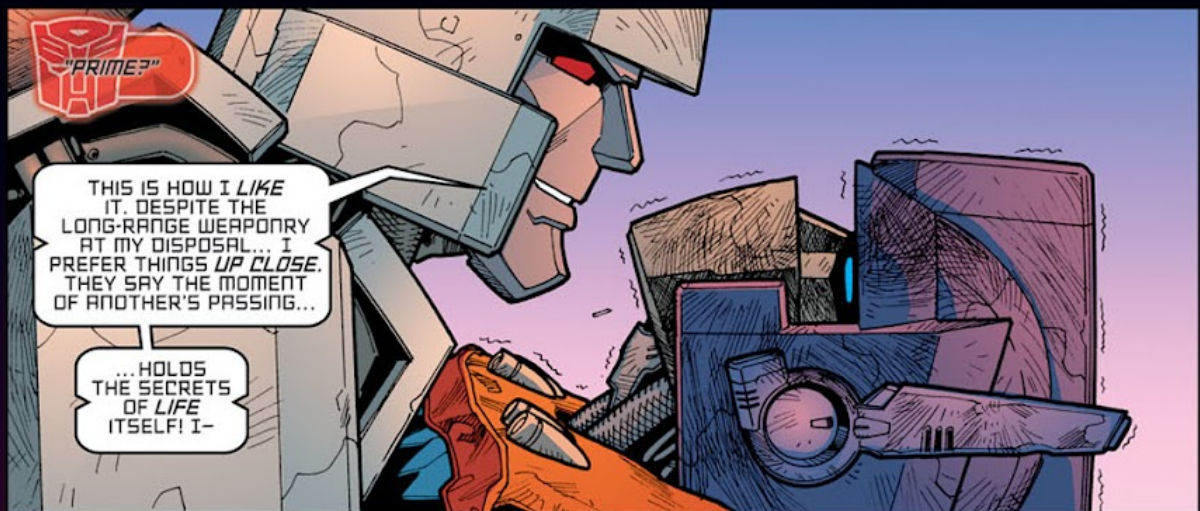


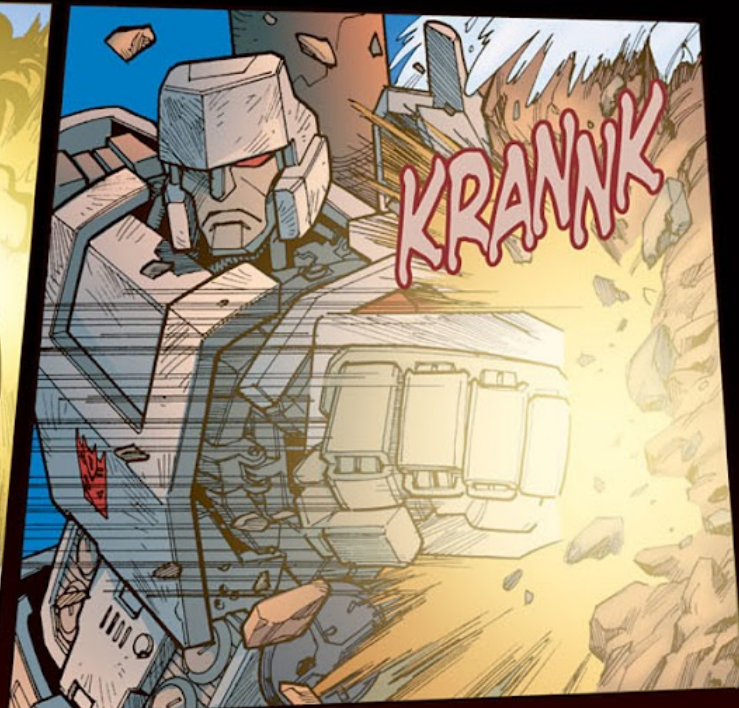
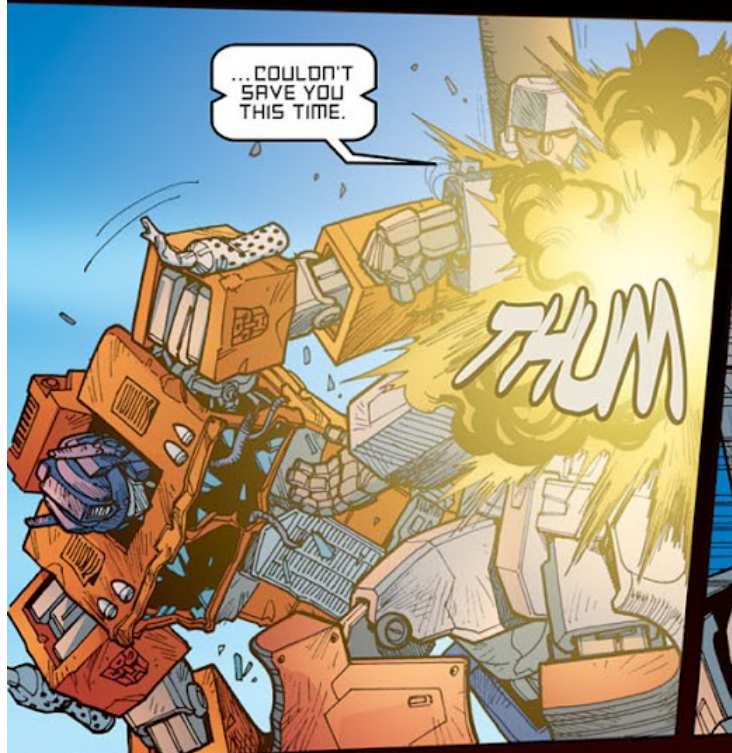
...IS MOST
CERTAINLY *NOT*
GEORGI KOSKA.



STAND DOWN
TO CONDITION
TWO AND PULL
BACK.

NOW!





THERE.
NOW...

...PRIME?

HN. PITY. GIVEN ALL
THAT QUASI-MYSTICAL
NONSENSE YOU PRIMES
ROUTINELY SPOUT, I'D
EXPECTED SOMETHING
MORE...

...ENLIGHTENING.

(INTERLUDE) EUREKA, NEVADA:

WHAT'S
GOING ON?
CLIVE?

PROFESSOR
GORING!

THANK GOODNESS
YOU'RE HERE! THEY'RE
TELLING US WE *CAN'T* GO
IN, THAT THE DIG'S BEEN
PLACED UNDER *OFFICIAL*
JURISDICTION.

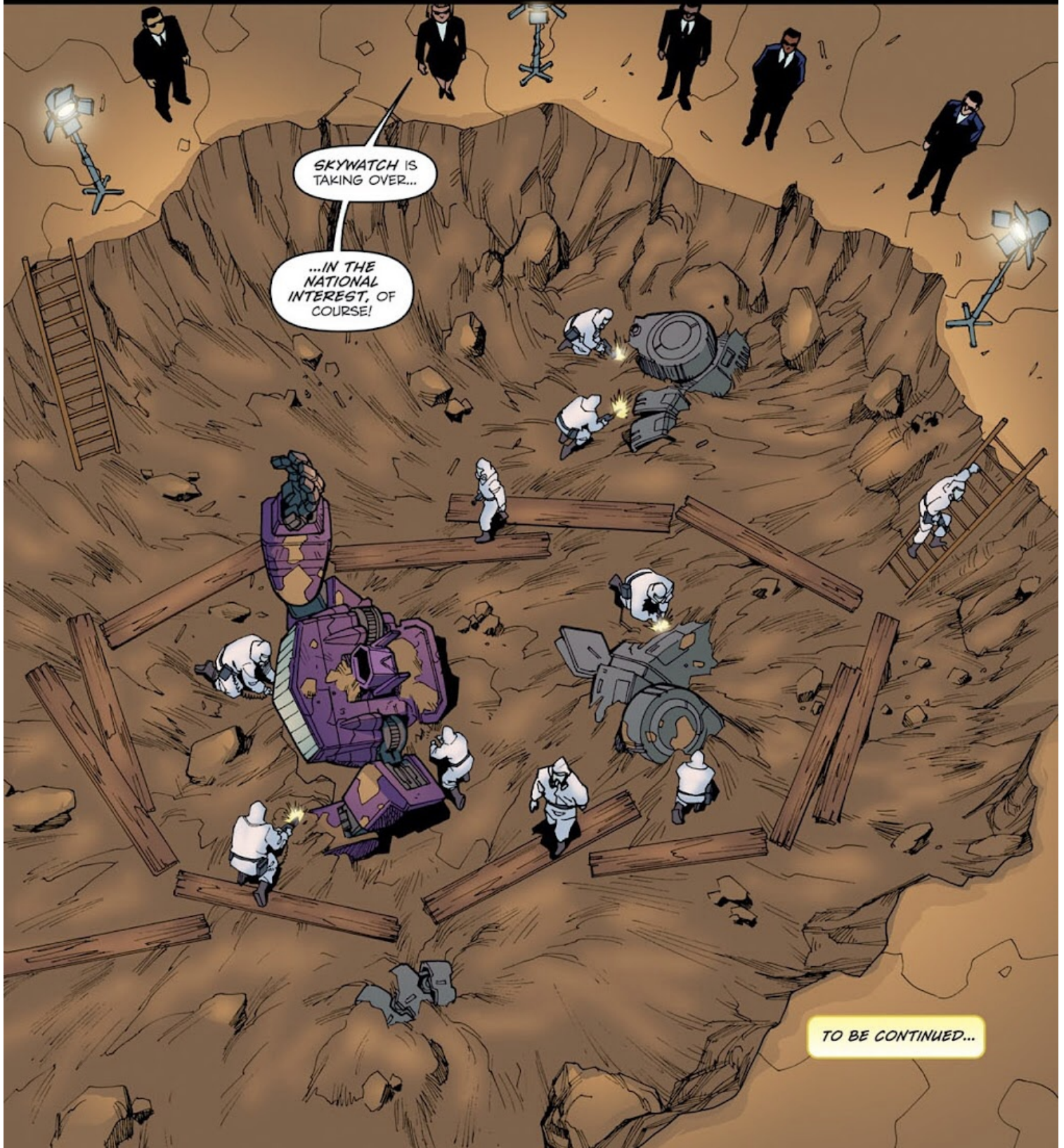
OFFICIAL—?
BUT... WHAT ABOUT
OUR SPONSORS?
THE UNIVERSITY?

WHO'S IN
CHARGE
HERE?

NO IDEA.
NOT THE
COPS.

THEY'RE JUST
TO KEEP US *OUT*.
THE GUYS RUNNING
THE SHOW...

...*AREN'T*
EXACTLY
FLASHING THEIR
CREDENTIALS!



TO BE CONTINUED...



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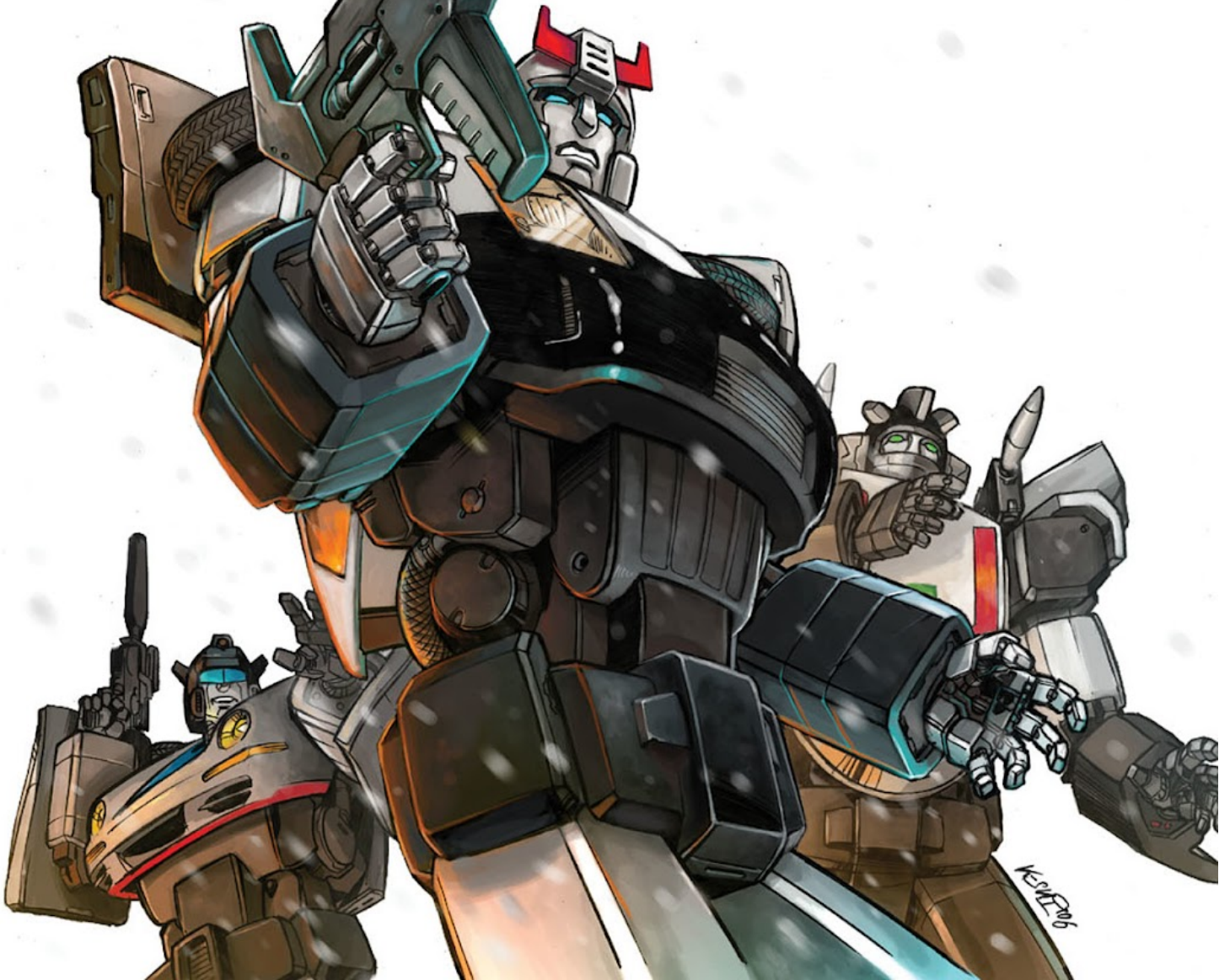


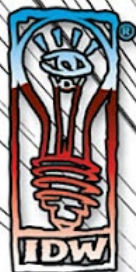
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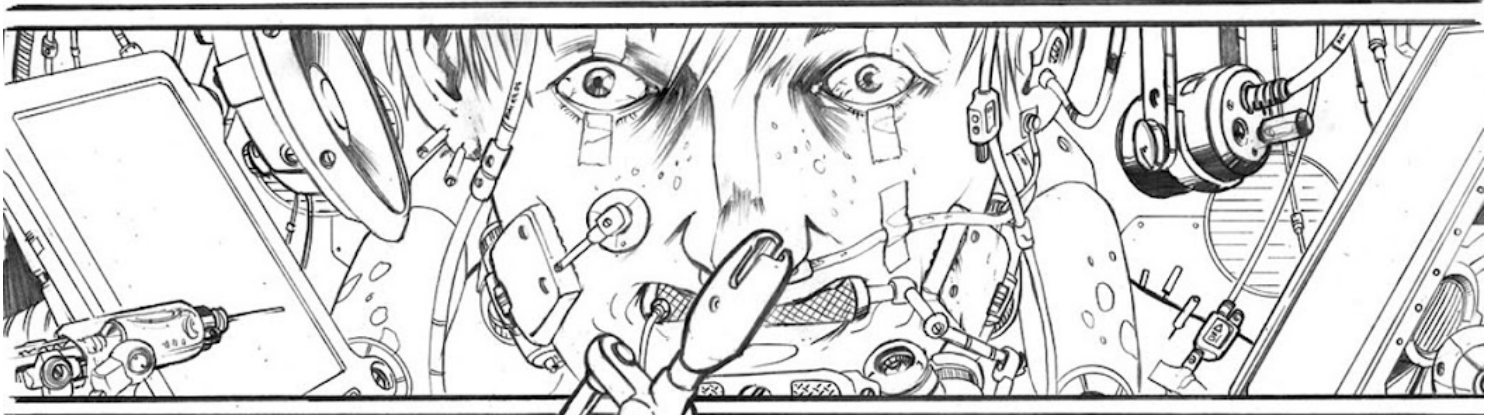


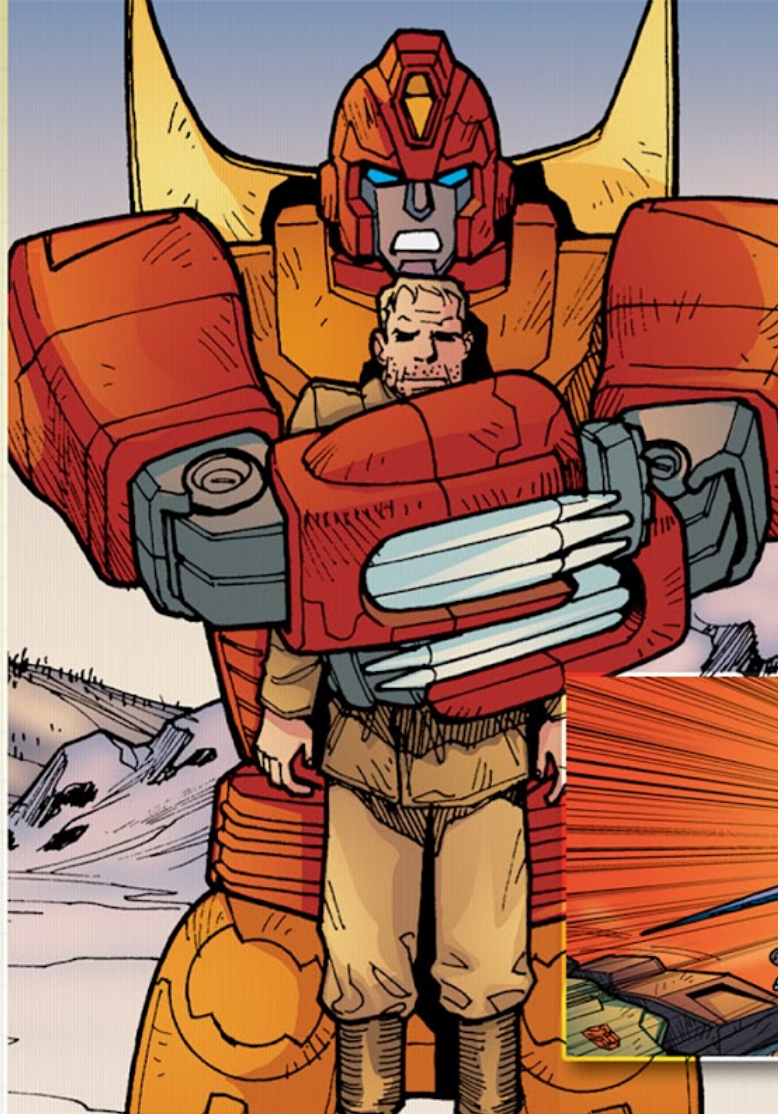


ISSUE #6
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THE TRANSFORMERS™

ESCALATION





THE TRANSFORMERS ESCALATION

WRITTEN BY : **SIMON FURMAN**

ART BY : **E.J. SU**

COLORS BY : **ZAC ATKINSON**

LETTERS BY : **ROBBIE ROBBINS**

EDITS BY : **CHRIS RYALL & DAN TAYLOR**

COVER BY : **E.J. SU**

VARIANT COVER BY : **KLAUS SCHERWINSKI**



ISSUE NUMBER SIX

ESCALATION:

The no-holds-barred battle between OPTIMUS PRIME and MEGATRON in Brasnya has ended with the apparent death of the AUTOBOT Commander-in-Chief. Meanwhile, OPTIMUS PRIME's troops fight on, the precious facsimile cargo (in the shape of dissident GEORGI KOSKA) now in the hands of HOT ROD and PROWL. And in Fort Wayne, Indiana, IRONHIDE and RATCHET attempt to extricate the trapped and unconscious VERITY CARLO and JIMMY PINK from a Machination sub-basement before the countdown to detonation reaches zero...

PHASE TWO CONCLUDES...



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Special thanks to Hasbro's Aaron Archer, Elizabeth Griffin, Sheri Lucci and Richard Zambarano for their invaluable assistance.

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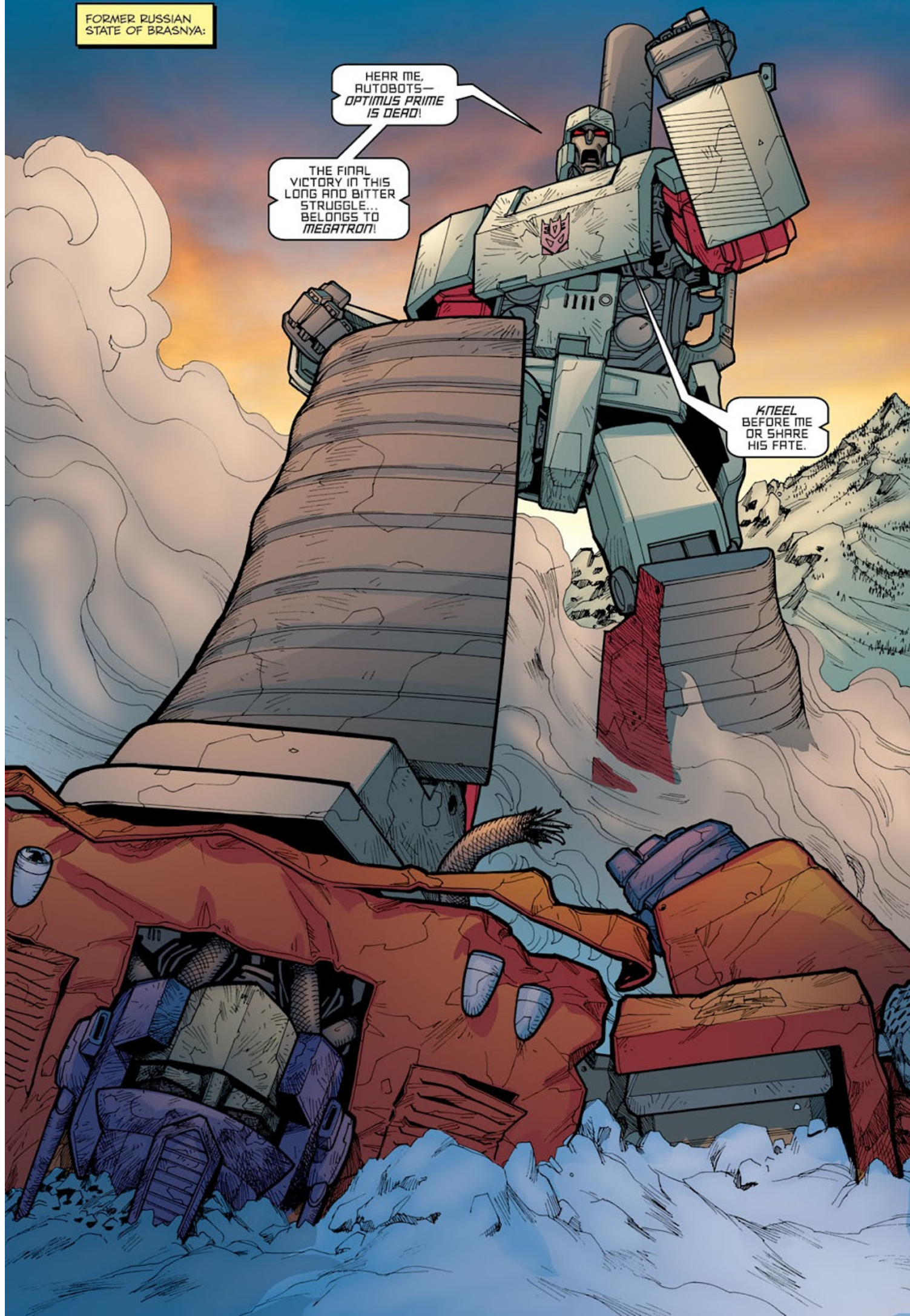
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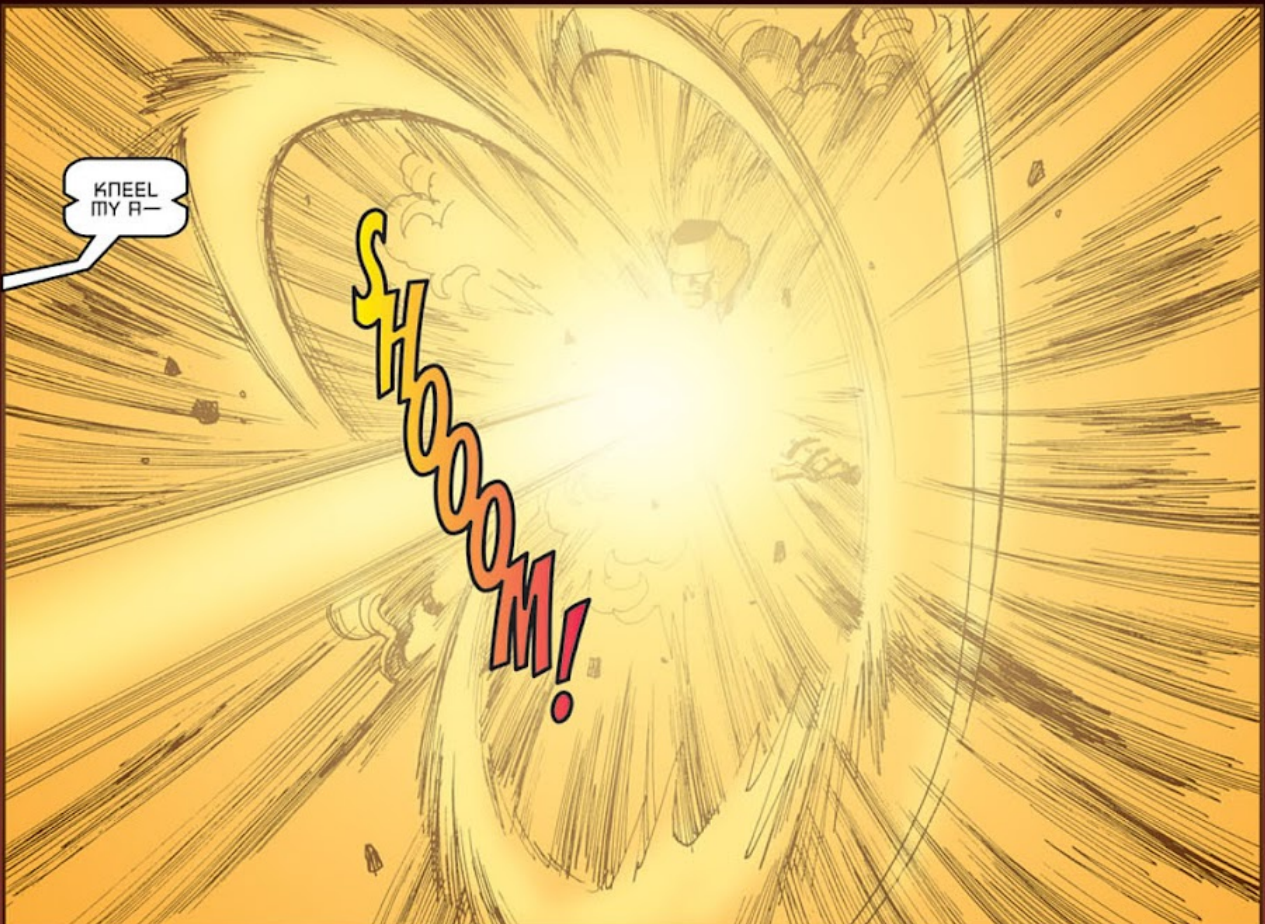
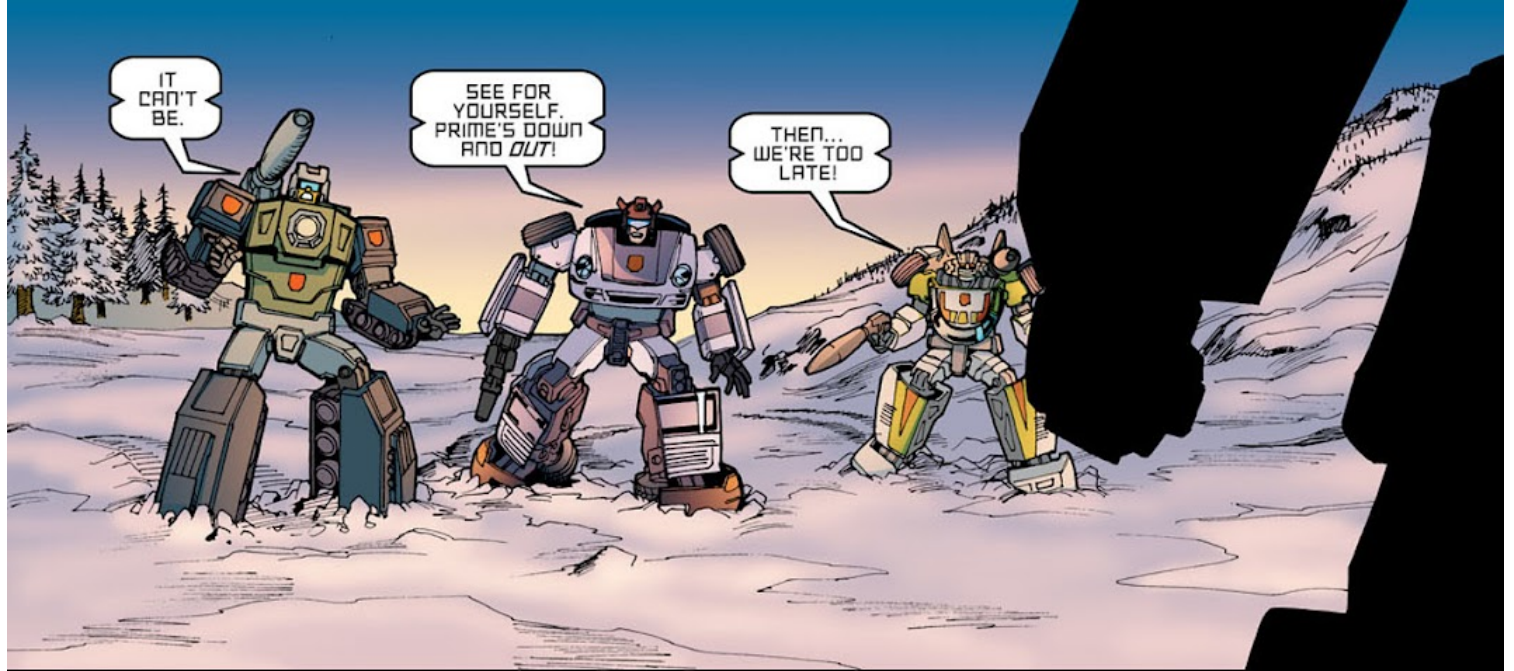
FORMER RUSSIAN
STATE OF BRASNYA:

HEAR ME,
AUTOBOTS—
*OPTIMUS PRIME
IS DEAD!*

THE FINAL
VICTORY IN THIS
LONG AND BITTER
STRUGGLE...
BELONGS TO
MEGATRON!

*KNEEL
BEFORE ME
OR SHARE
HIS FATE.*







YOU
KNOW...

...I ALMOST
FELT THAT.



HARDHEAD,
JAZZ—TAKE
HIM DOWN!

HOW?

I WOULDN'T
HAVE EXACTLY
RATED OUR
CHANCES BEFORE,
WHEELJACK, BUT
NOW IT'S LIKE
OUR BEST...



...DOESN'T EVEN
PASS MUSTER!



DUE WEST:

FALL BACK!
HARDHEAD!

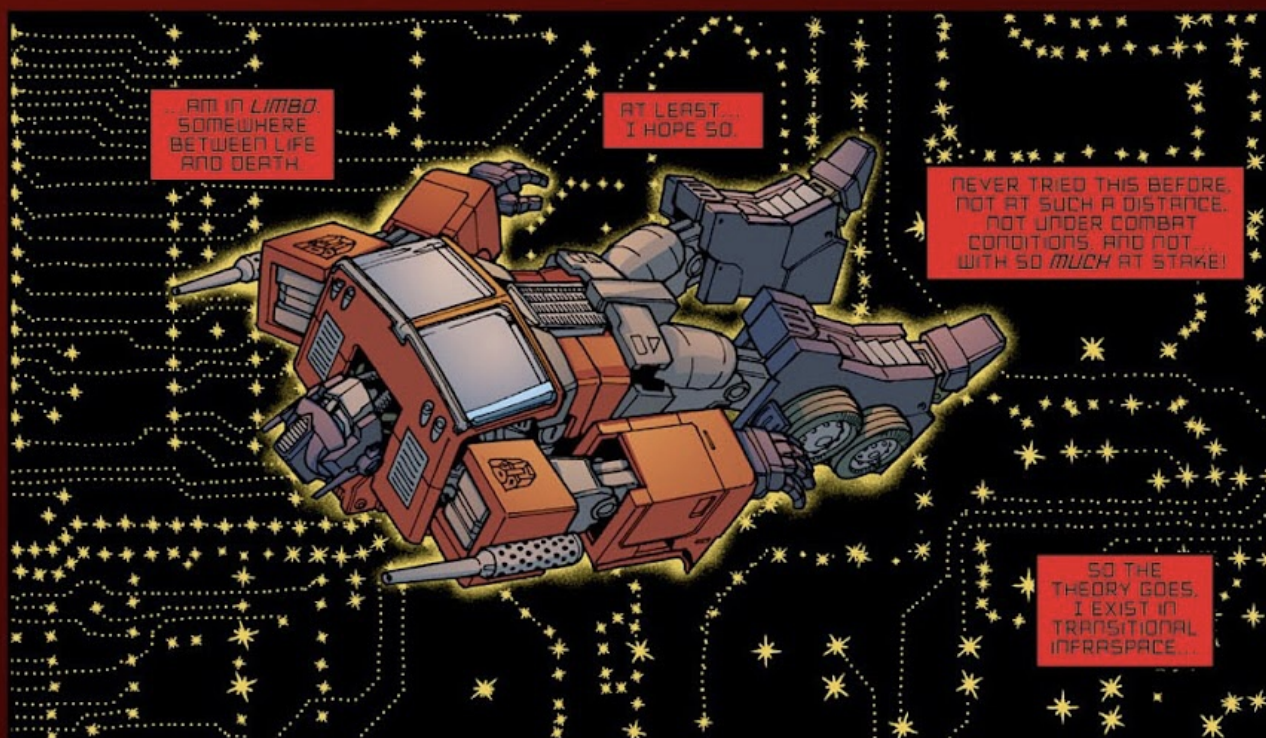
NO, WE GOTTA
DRAW THE LINE
SOMEWHERE, AND
HE—UNNN!

DAMMIT.
MEGATRON'S
POWERED UP
ON DRE-13.
HE'LL TAKE
THEM APART!

SO WHAT ARE
WE WAITING
FOR? C'MON,
PROWL...

...LET'S
ROLL!





A PRESENCE, HAUNTINGLY FAMILIAR AND YET *UTTERLY* ALIEN, PUSHES INTO THE SAME SPACE, BRINGING WITH IT...

A TANGIBLE AND NUMBING *DREAD*.

AT FIRST, IT SEEMS *BARELY* AWARE OF ME.

I SENSE IT IS OBSERVING NOT ANY ONE INDIVIDUAL OR EVENT BUT *EVERYTHING*. IT'S AS IF THIS WORLD—PERHAPS EVEN THIS WHOLE UNIVERSE—WERE LAID BARE LIKE SOME MORTUARY CADRIVER.

THEN, I AM *NOTICED*. AN UNSPEAKABLE, UNQUANTIFIABLE *TERROR* GRIPS ME AS ITS NECROGRAPHER'S GAZE FALLS ON ME.

IT *KNOWS* ME.

PRIME.

AND I...

KNOW IT.

PRIME?!

FORT WAYNE, INDIANA:

RATCHET, ARE
YOU SET?

YES.
FINALLY, I'VE
GOT A SOLID
FIX ON YOUR
POSITION.

GOOD.
SO...

...GET CUTTING!

UNDERWAY...

VAZZI!
VAZZI!

AND
RATCHET...



BRAGNYA:

ALL OF YOU...

...BACK
OFF—NOW!

THWUMMM!

SEEMS
MEGATRON'S GOT
NO REAL LONG-RANGE
WEAPONRY AT HIS
DISPOSAL AND NO
WAY TO ACCESS HIS
ALT-MODE WITHOUT
SOMEONE TO HOLD
AND AIM HIM. SO...

...WE KEEP
FALLING BACK.
WHEN WE'VE
GOT SOME
DISTANCE, WE
ATTACK AGAIN.
NOW MOVE!

YOU TOO,
HARDHEAD.

YEH, YEH.

FTUM!
FTUM!



PROWL—IT'S PRIME.

PRIME? BUT I THOUGHT—

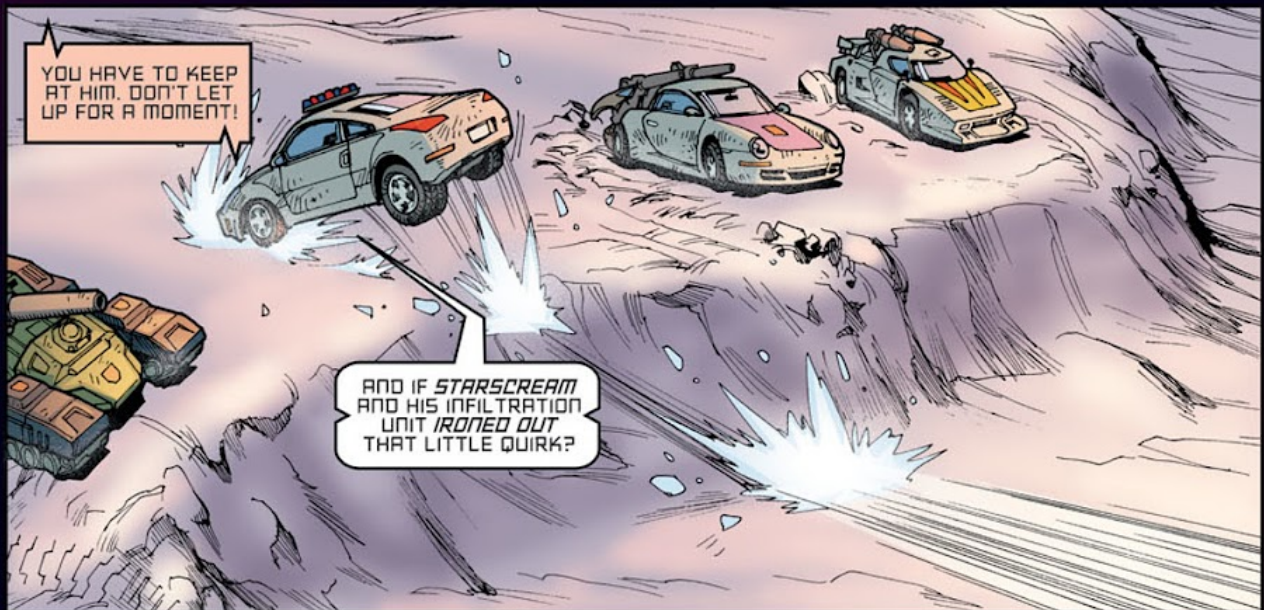


THAT I WAS DEAD? IT WAS VERY, VERY CLOSE. THANKFULLY, ROLLER GAVE ME THE PRECIOUS MOMENTS I NEEDED...



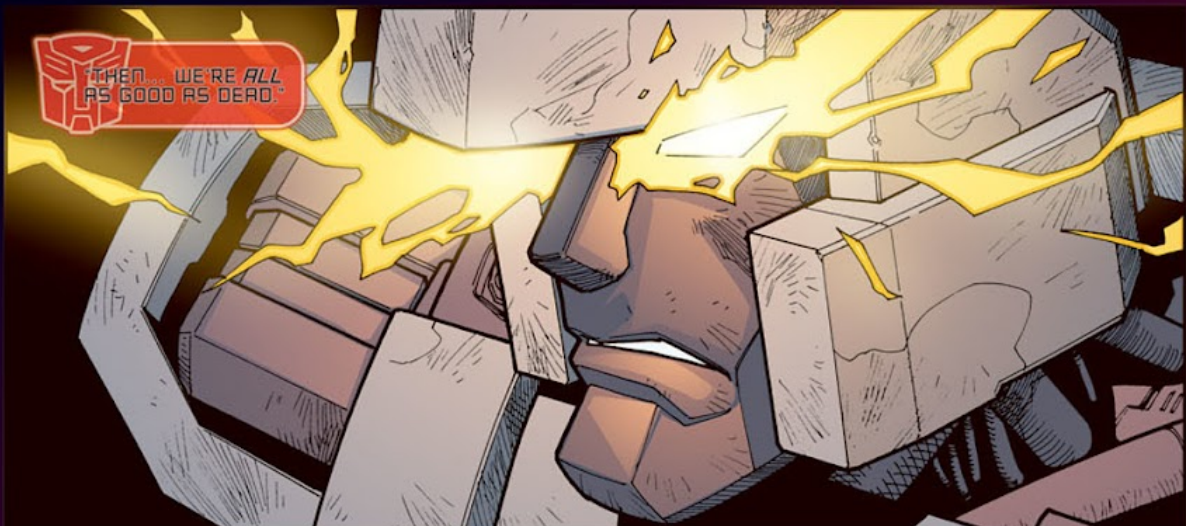
...TO DUMP MY HIGHER FUNCTIONS INTO THE TRAILER'S ANCILLIARY SYSTEMS, THEREBY CONVINCING MEGATRON I'D EXPIRED.

NOW, LISTEN... IF ORE-13 IS THE SAME AS THE ULTRA-ENERGON I ENCOUNTERED ON CYBERTRON, THEN IT HAS A BUILT-IN WEAKNESS... ONE THAT MEGATRON KNOWS NOTHING ABOUT!



YOU HAVE TO KEEP AT HIM. DON'T LET UP FOR A MOMENT!

AND IF STARScream AND HIS INFILTRATION UNIT IRONED OUT THAT LITTLE QUIRK?



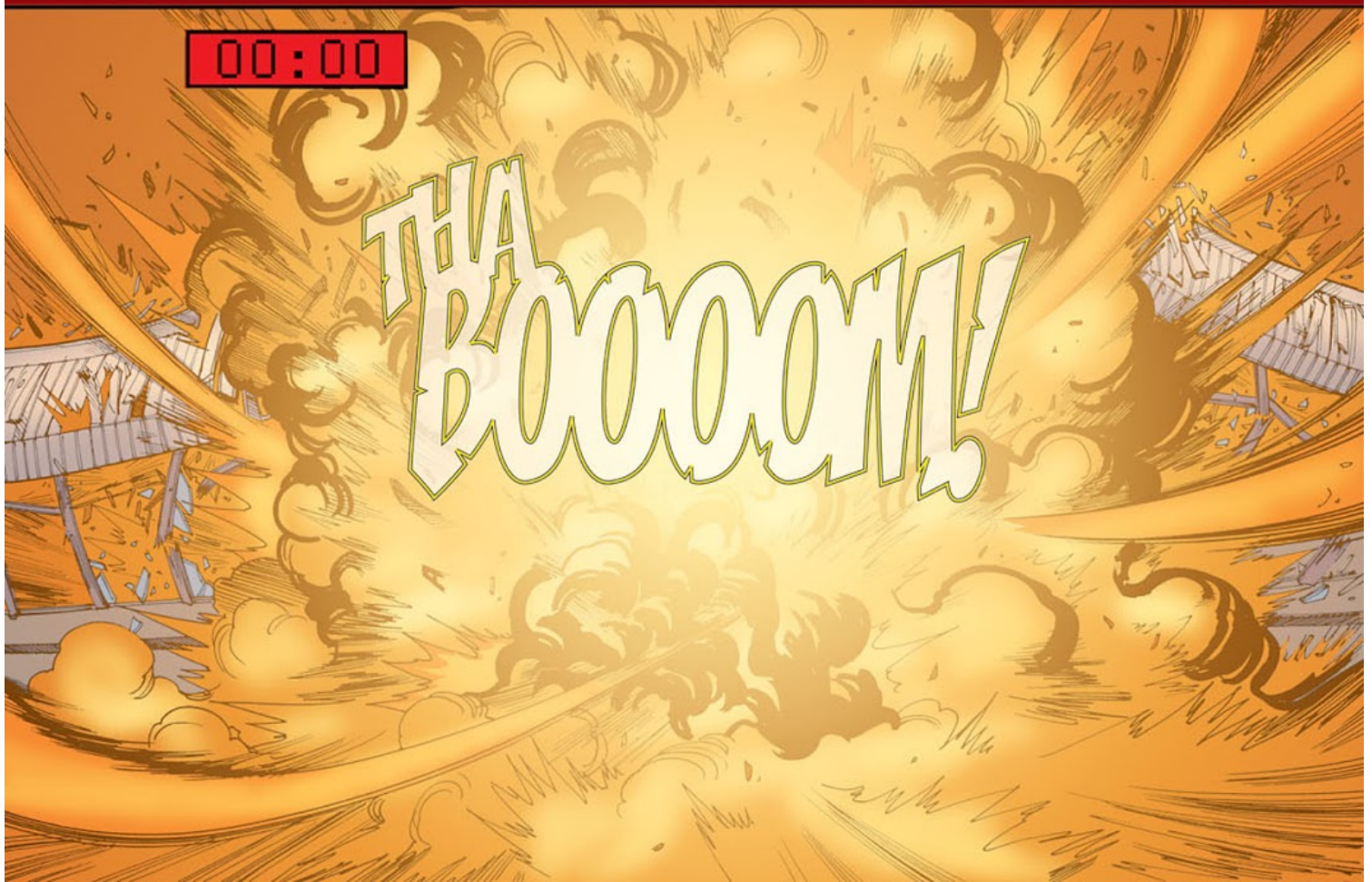
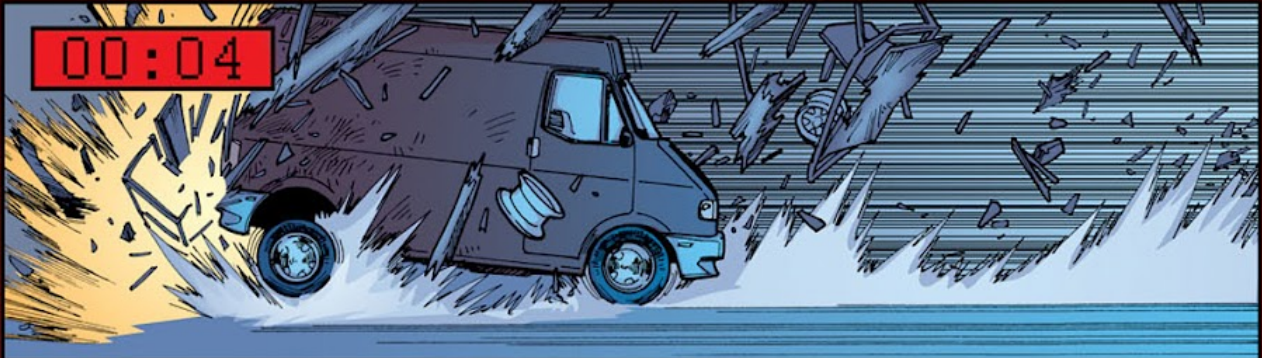
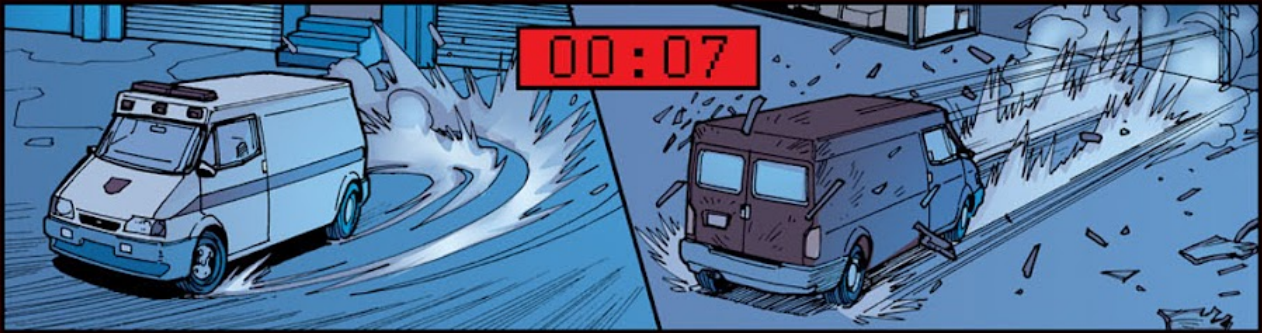
THEN... WE'RE ALL AS GOOD AS DEAD.

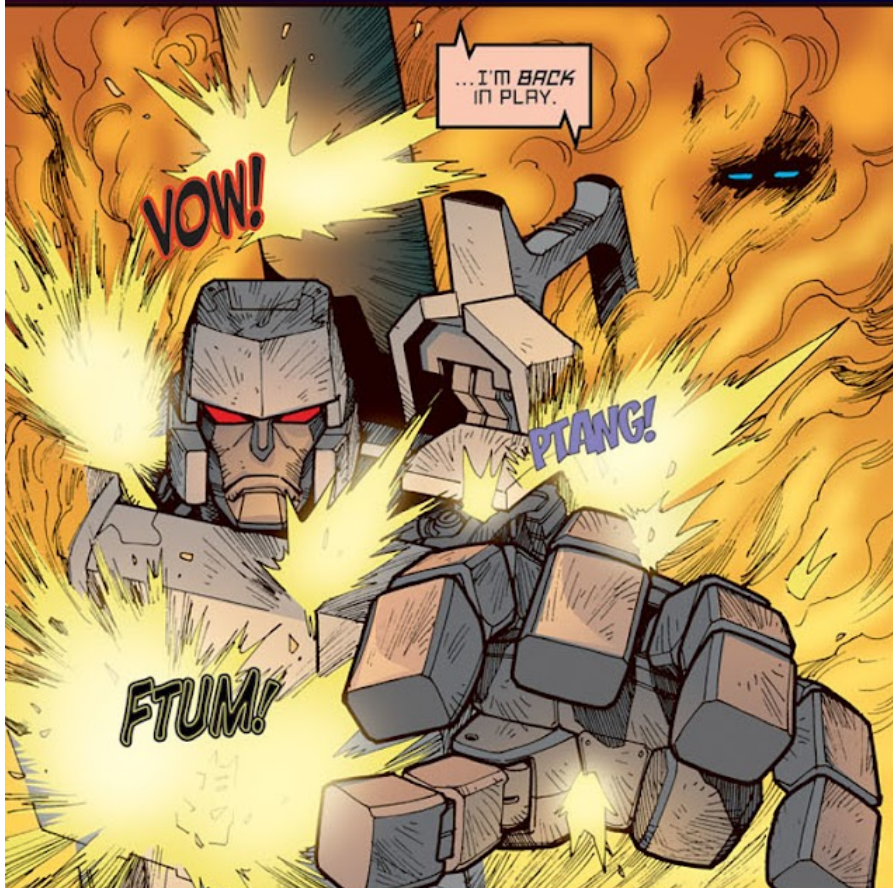
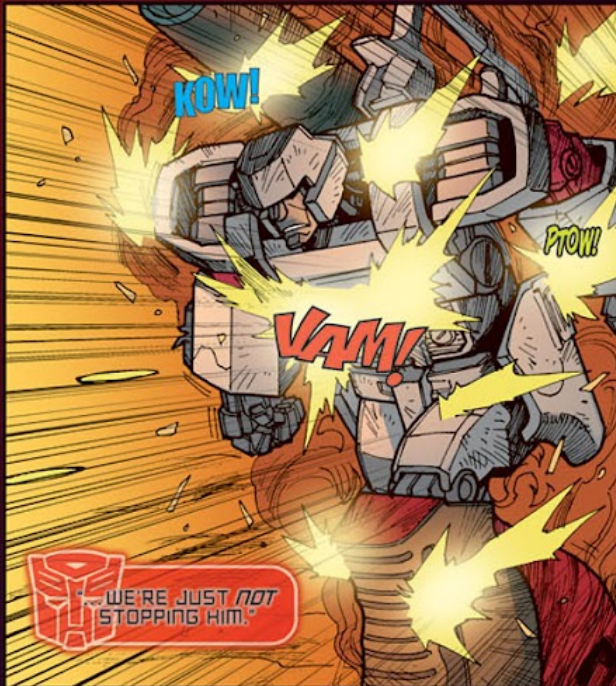
ARK-32:



FORT WAYNE:









...BURN!

CHEE LOOW!

DUE WEST:

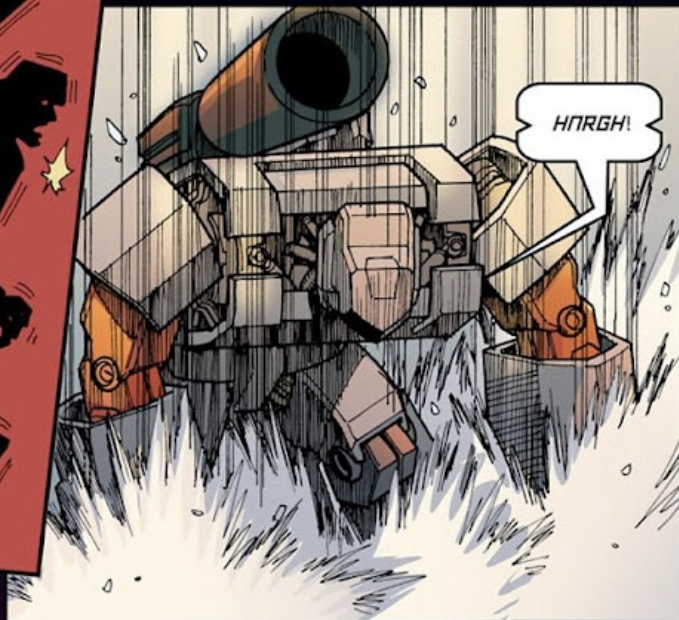
AAH! KKK!
NIGHTBEAT—
JUST GET ME
OUT OF HERE!

NNNNOW!



... ENOUGH...

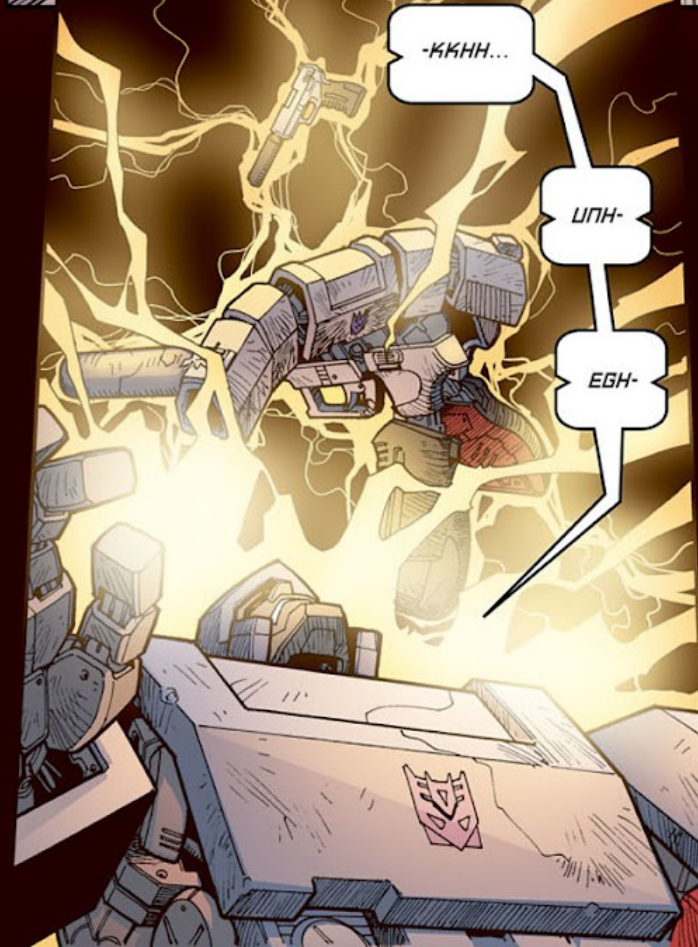
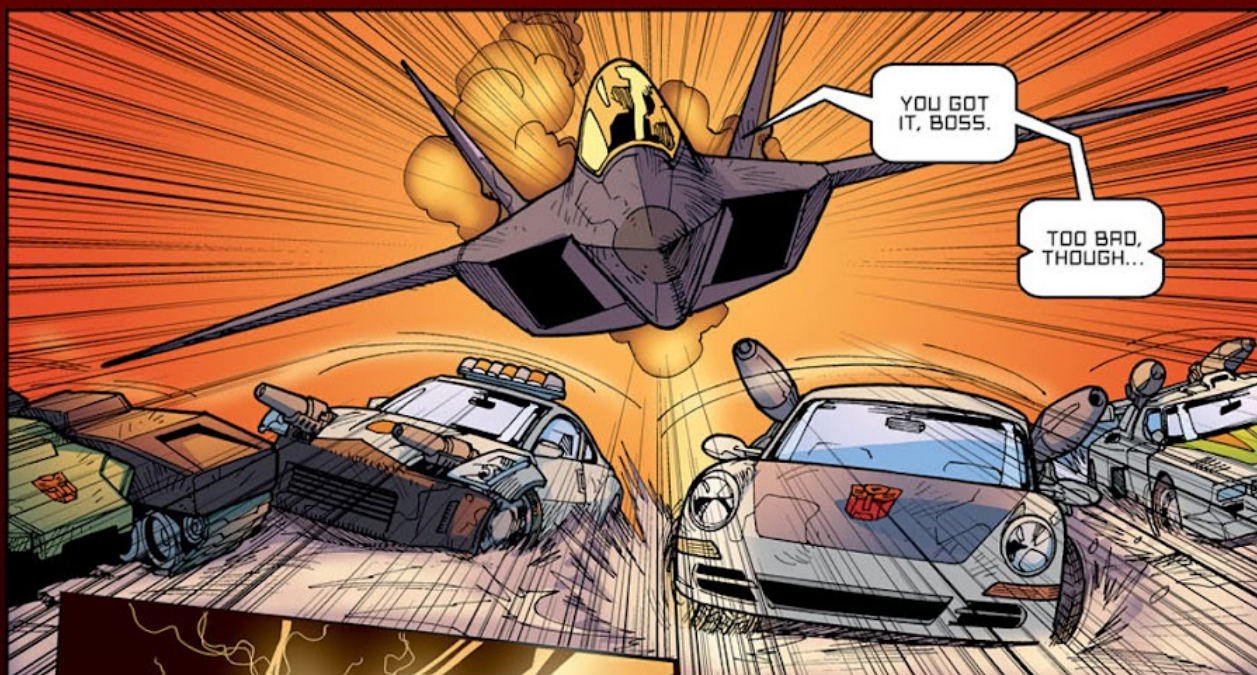
...I-



FNEH!
WHAT... IS...
HAPPENING
TO ME?

UNFORTUNATELY,
MEGATRON, THE
POWER YOU HAVE
HARVESTED...

... COMES
AT A
PRICE!





WELL...
THERE'S
ALWAYS
NEXT TIME!



PRIME!
ARE
YOU—?

MEGATRON-HK—NEARLY
CRUSHED MY SPARK
CASING. I'M GOING TO
NEED SOME C.R.* TIME.

WHAT ABOUT
THE FACSIMILE?

*CRYOGENIC REGENERATION



HOT ROD'S
GOT HIM.

HOT ROD?

PROWL, THIS IS
NIGHTBEAT.



NIGHTBEAT?
WHERE'S
HOT ROD?

IN A C.R. CHAMBER.
HE SUSTAINED SOME
PRETTY SEVERE
DAMAGE COURTESY
OF SKYWARP AND
THUNDERCRACKER.

AND THE
FACSIMILE?



CAUGHT
SOME FLAK.
I'M SORRY...

...HE'S
GONE.

FORT WAYNE:



DAMN. WHAT
DO I DO *now*?
THIS IS SUCH
A MESS.

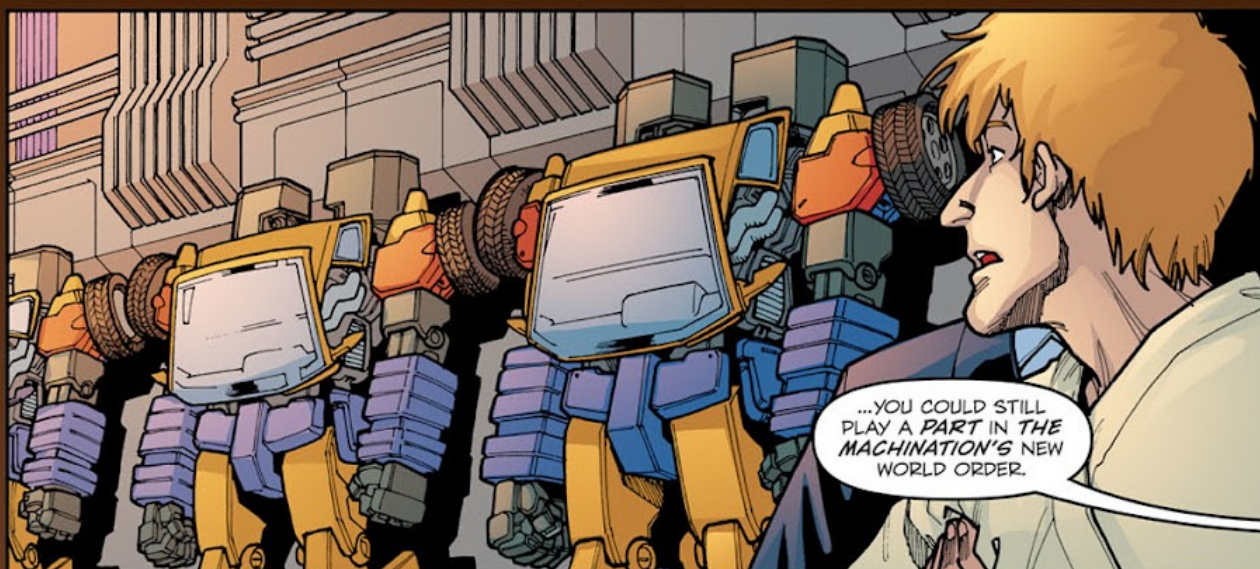
SUNSTREAKER,
IRONHIDE...
WHO'S *next*?
AND STILL...

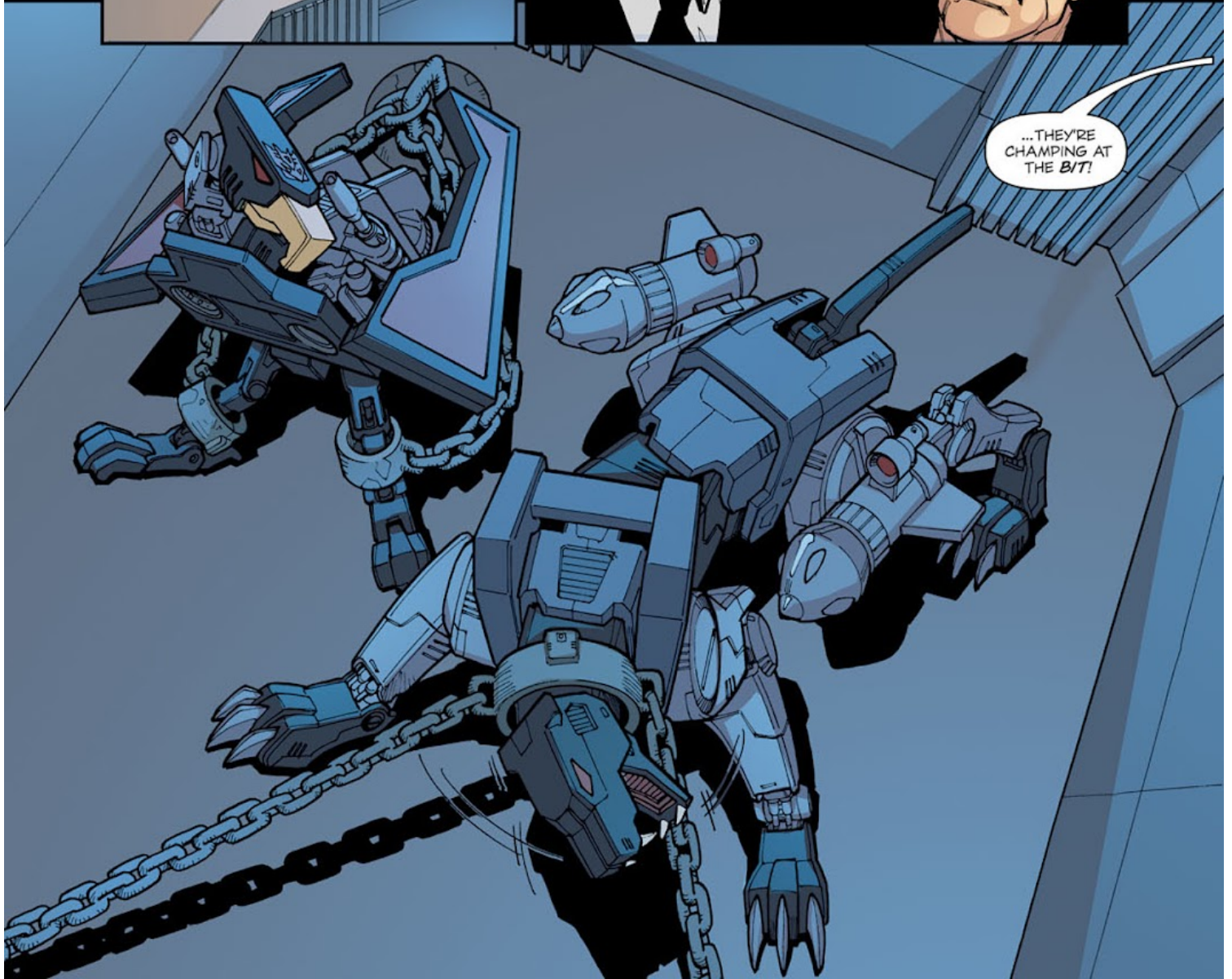
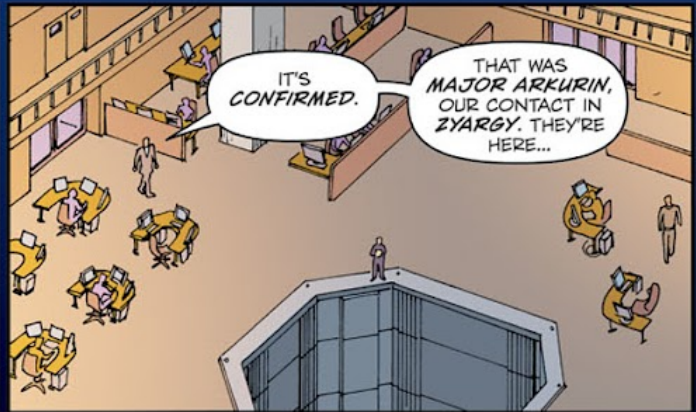
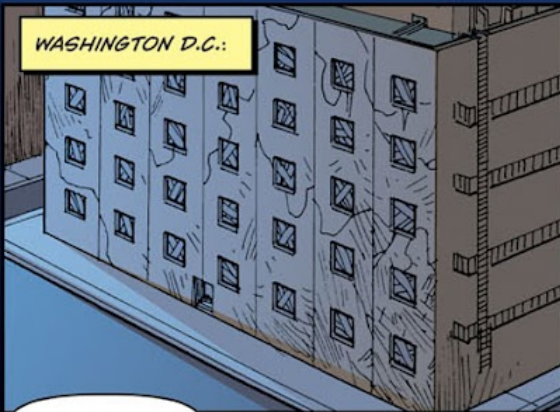


WE HAVE *no*
idea WHO'S BEHIND
ALL THIS!



TAMPA, FLORIDA:





DECEPTICON COMMAND BUNKER, OREGON:



AS PRIME HAS SEEN
FIT TO INTRODUCE
REINFORCEMENTS, SO
SHALL I. ASTROTRAIN...

